

POLITICS, GOVERNANCE AND THE SHAPING OF SMETHWICK SINCE 1945

By

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Abstract

A historical study of Smethwick, an inner-industrial area in the West Midlands affected by extreme structural change, with postwar housing redevelopment and local government reorganisation additional legacies. It uses interviews with past and present policymakers, managers, local stakeholders; and the author's 'participant observer' background, as past councillor, officer and consultant. Historical GIS mapping and grey literature identify past investment programmes, changing conditions and outcomes in Smethwick and equivalent places, like Salford. Managing decline preoccupied the wider Sandwell local authority after 1974, itself targeted with area-based initiatives until the end of explicit national urban policy in 2010. External shocks, critical junctures including national intervention; and local socio-cultural, political-institutional circumstances created local path dependencies. A paternalistic culture, reactive crisis management, spatial incoherence and community-partnership mistrust was exhibited. Local government bears significant responsibility for the severity and prolongation of neighbourhood collapse in Smethwick. Regulatory, landlord and landholding roles, wider relationships and long-term 'ways of thinking' emerge as critical to overall stewardship of place. For local authorities facing rapid and complex change, depleted by 'austerity-localism', community partnership is critical to leadership. Smethwick, hitherto recognised for past industrial prowess and the political exploitation of race, offers also policy lessons for how governance matters to place.

To my godparents
John Cashmore and Phyllis Sandford
James and Pamela Cashmore

Frontispiece

L V Adams, J H Alcock, J W Alder, G H Aldridge, R S Andrews, F Aspy, E M Badham, R Badham, R S Badham, B S Bawa, M Benham, F Bodenham, H Bone, A Bradford, D Bragg, J E Brain, P D Branson, M Bridges, J Briggs, G R Brittan, R Broaderwick, E T Brown, B K Budd, K W Bunch, S Butler, A J Carey, L Carter, W Carter, W A Chandler, P C Coleman, J M Collins, E Condon, S J Cooper, D C Cooper, H W Cope, E R Crawford, A S Cresswell, A J Crowder, R Crumpton, J W Darby, J Davidson, K W Davies, P A Davies, R Davis, A J P Dean, B S Dhallu, K Duffell, L Edwards, S C Eling, T W Evans, W A Exton, D M Fairbank, E M Farley, J W Faulkner, C Fincher, A D Finney, L Fletcher, B A W Foster, D J Futcher, J S Gill, P K Gill, H E Glover, D Goodwin, E H Goreham, E Gould, M Griffin, P H S Griffiths, R Hale, T H Halfpenny, D A Hallam, H Hamilton, A Harris, G F Harrison, A R A Harrod, A R Hazleton, M Hlinka, H R Hodges, W Holland, B S Hope, H J Horton, L R Horton, R L Horton, J Hughes, H V Jackson, A G Jaron, G S Josan, S S Josan, C R Kennedy, L G Kendrick, C T Kerton, J Kimberley, M Kimberley, M Kimberley, C Kirkham, E M Kontowska, F Krivine, G R Langford, F Latham, A Layland, W Layland, C Lee, E Lee, A E Lennard, A V Littlehayles, E Lowry, S P Lugg, W Lunn, F MacDonald, T R Marshall, C H Marriott, W G Mason, A May, G K McKenzie, J W McKenzie, T C McKenzie, S Messenger, H O Millward, A T Morris, L L Morris, L N Morrison-Wells, G Motterham, D K Newman, J H M Niven, N C Niven, O B Pace, R W Page, G M Pemberton, S P Pemberton, F W Perry, W H Perry, B N E Phillips, N W Phillips, E Pine, H G Pinner, R F Piper, A J Powell, B J Powell, M Prestidge, R L Pritchard, K A Rahman, P Randhawa, J J Randle, A J M Reay, E Reece, S G Richards, M Richards, B G Roberts, E Rogers, L Rose, M Rouf, M Sahki, E Seager, F G Sharp, D Shuker, G H Shuker, V Silvester, E Skelding, G H Smallwood, A J Smith, F D Smith, F S Smith, P A Smith, R C Smith, D A Soden, C G Spragg, R Starkie, R Starling, A Stimpson, C W Taylor, J J B Taylor, L C Taylor, F W Thornton, W Thornton, E C Tutty, A Uppal, A A Vernon, D Watling, R West, F L Wheatley, M J Whitby, R D M Whiting, C V Williams, V R Williams, G I Wyton, L E Yates, R B Young, M Zaheer, A Zahoor.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABI	Area-based initiative
ALMO	Arms-length Management Organisation
AWM	Advantage West Midlands
BCDC	Black Country Development Corporation
BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
BME	Black and minority ethnic
BRCW	Birmingham Carriage & Wagon Company Limited
CIR	Commission for Industrial Relations
CLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DETR	Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
DoE	Department of the Environment
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EEA	Employment Exchange Area
ERCF	Estates Renewal Challenge Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
GIS	Geographic Information System
GKN	Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds Limited
GRO	General Register Office
HAT	Housing Action Trust
HCA	Homes and Communities Agency
HMR	Housing Market Renewal
HMSO	Her/His Majesty's Stationery Office
HRA	Housing Revenue Account
IAP	Inner Area Programme
JRF	Joseph Rowntree Foundation
LEA	Local Education Authority
MACE	Media Archive for Central England
MBC	Metropolitan Borough Council
MHLG	Ministry of Housing and Local Government
MP	Member of Parliament
NASS	National Asylum Seeker Service
NDC	New Deal for Communities
NRF	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ONS	Office for National Statistics
OPCS	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys
PCRL	People's Community Radio Link
PFI	Private Finance Initiative
PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers
RDA	Regional Development Agency
RTB	Right-to-Buy
SN	Special Note
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
SRP	Smethwick Regeneration Partnership
TUPE	Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations
UDC	Urban Development Corporation
UDP	Unitary Development Plan
URC	Urban Regeneration Company
WCC	Worcestershire County Council
WMCC	West Midlands County Council
WRF	Working Neighbourhoods Fund

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This research was sparked by the end in 2010–11 of national urban policy and regeneration programmes affecting places such as Smethwick, an industrial area in the West Midlands conurbation shown in Figure 1.1. The study covers the period 1945 to 2015, the recent past in local historical research, but a period of transformational change in Smethwick.¹ This chapter introduces Smethwick, and the study's purpose in assessing the long-term effectiveness of local government in managing it as a place. It identifies the research approach and resulting methodology. The chapter ends by outlining the scope of subsequent chapters and appendices.

1.1 Research Approach and Study Questions

This section locates Smethwick in its urban historical context. It outlines the approach taken in framing the research question, together with the principal themes and drivers of change shaping Smethwick. It identifies the contribution to Smethwick historiography and wider academic and policy understanding of wider urban change. It argues that Smethwick provides an opportunity to study the interaction of national policy, local practice and the particularity of place.

¹ Christopher Dyer, Andrew Hopper *et al.*, 'Introduction: Local history in the twenty-first century', in Christopher Dyer, Andrew Hopper *et al.* (eds.), *New Directions in Local History since Hoskins* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2011), 8.

Smethwick developed in the nineteenth-century as a major industrial spur of the north-west Birmingham urban area. But it was not part of the 'Greater Birmingham' local government expansion and thereby flourished in the first half of the twentieth-century as an interstice with the adjacent Black Country.² It was described as 'probably the most heavily industrialised area in the whole of England'.³ It contained some of the 'great names' of industry such as 'Chance, Tangye, Phillips, and many others – carrying the name of the Borough to the ends of the world'.⁴ When Smethwick faded economically and was absorbed administratively, it lost much of its identity and 'sense of place'. Its problems were complex and severe, but located within newly-created local government areas with competing needs. In 2015, Smethwick was best understood as a loose township within the local authority district of Sandwell, rather than a freestanding town (Figure 1.2).⁵ Yet Sandwell, created only in 1974, had little resonance across its previous six towns, or more widely.

² 'Greater Birmingham' refers to the administrative expansion of Birmingham beyond the confines of the 1838 Borough with the successive incorporation of adjacent areas between 1891 and 1911 (see Chapter 4).

³ Smethwick Corporation, 'Smethwick Staffordshire—The Official Industrial Handbook', [council report], Cheltenham: Ed. J. Burrow, 1959, 54.

⁴ Smethwick Corporation, 'Industrial Handbook (1959 edn.)', 1.

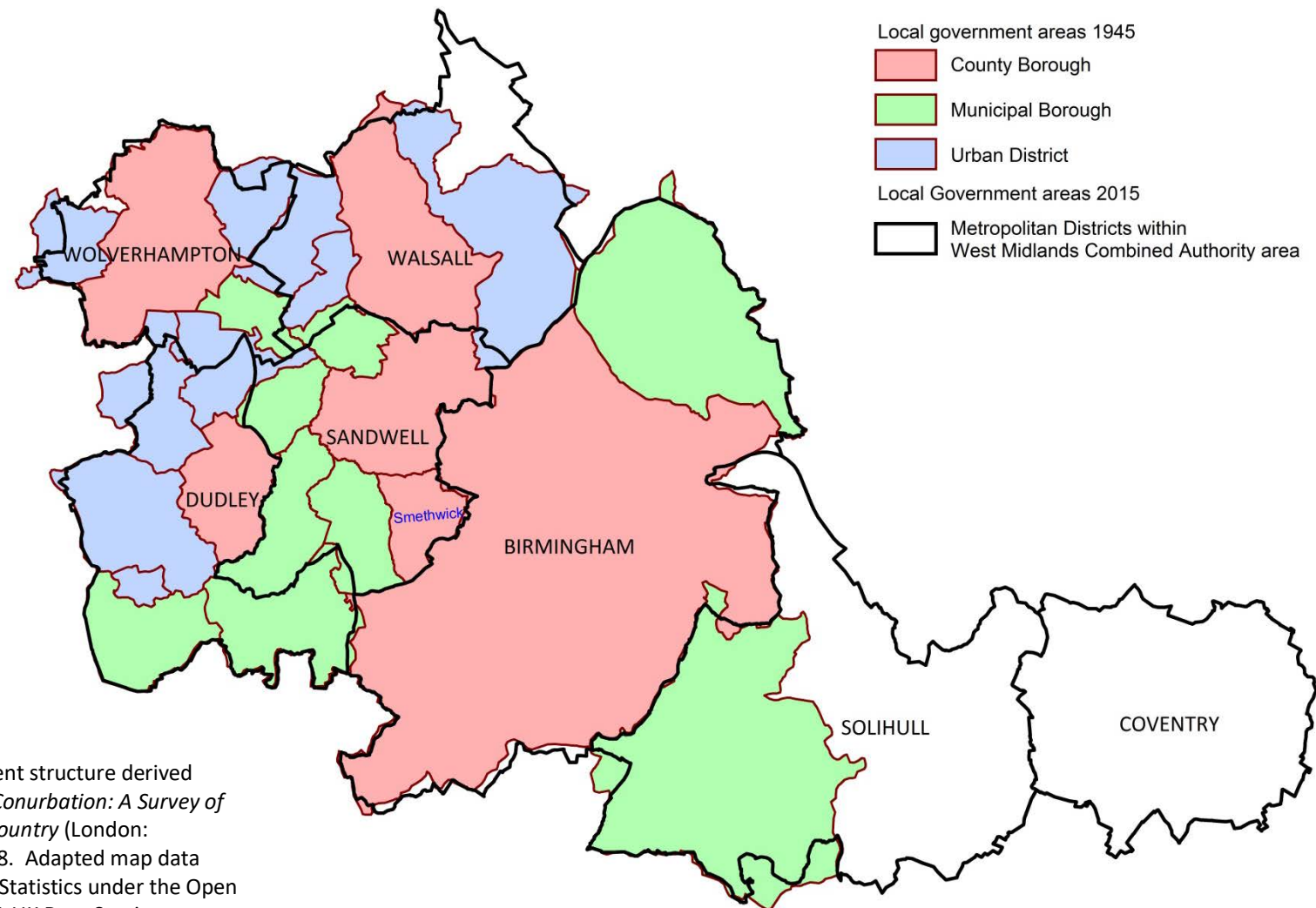
⁵ Richard Young, 'Interviews with Author', 31 May 2012, 25 September 2013 and 23 April 2014. Young was a Labour councillor for Bristnall ward in 1991–2004 and vice chair of housing, chair of finance and deputy leader of Sandwell who also lived in Windmill Lane.

Figure 1.1: Location of Smethwick within the UK



Source: Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A UK Data Service product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153..

Figure 1.2: Relationship of Smethwick and the West Midlands conurbation, 1945 and 2015



Source: 1945 local government structure derived from West Midland Group, *Conurbation: A Survey of Birmingham and the Black Country* (London: Architectural Press, 1948), 48. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A UK Data Service product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

Economic decline, social change and national urban-related policy shaped Smethwick after 1945. Both delivery of services and responses to area decline occur within the dynamic of central-local relations, but Henderson *et al* identified the importance of specific cultural-institutional and spatial circumstances at the local level.⁶ So what Parker and Long termed the ‘balanced interplay between global and local forces’ produced options and choices for local politicians and government bodies in managing Smethwick as a place.⁷ This study consequently explores, as Robson put it, the ‘uniqueness of how things happen in a local area’ and what Prestidge termed ‘Smethwick particularism’.⁸

Smethwick must also be discussed in its urban-historical context. To what extent did it perform differently from other inner-urban areas in economic, housing and neighbourhood terms after 1945? How should such difference be explained? Reference is therefore needed to places where postwar local conditions were broadly alike, reflecting their historical urban evolution and continuing policy environment. Here Smethwick’s position as an area adjacent to a major city is the important factor.⁹ Among this cohort of inner-urban industrial towns, Salford had a markedly similar population density, housing mix, socio-economic and spatial relationship to its conurbation core (Manchester) as Smethwick did with Birmingham (Figure 1.1). Like Smethwick, it had an early leakage of population and jobs.¹⁰ But the particular local response to such challenges is the critical

⁶ Steven Henderson, Sophie Bowlby, and Mike Raco, ‘Refashioning Local Government and Inner-city Regeneration: The Salford Experience’, *Urban Studies*, 44/8 (2007), 1441–63; 1442.

⁷ David Parker and Paul Long, ‘Reimagining Birmingham: Public history, selective memory and the narration of urban change’, *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 6/2 (2003), 157–78, 175.

⁸ Brian Robson, *Those Inner Cities: Reconciling the economic and social aims of urban policy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), ix; Martin Prestidge, ‘Interview with Author’, 12 July 2013. Prestidge was a Sandwell Labour councillor for Soho ward in Smethwick in 1973–75 and Langley ward from 1987 to 2012.

⁹ Young, ‘Interviews’; Brendan Nevin, ‘Interviews with Author’, 6 August and 24 September 2013, 7 September 2015. Nevin was a researcher and government adviser and previous head of housing strategy in Sandwell.

¹⁰ See Special Note 1: Comparator areas to Smethwick and the selection of Salford.

issue. Salford is relevant in many respects, but this is not a comparative study. It is a 'microhistory' of Smethwick in a period where the playing-out of global and local forces in turn tells us something about the larger historical picture.¹¹

The literature reviewed for this study suggests that housing and regeneration tend to be treated separately in research, or combined in single-neighbourhood studies related to one phase of public intervention, such as an area-based initiative (ABI). Yet in some urban areas, ABIs are successively-layered episodes over a sixty-year period. Neighbourhood studies can neglect their wider city or sub-regional context. Among the most valuable are comparative estate studies by Lupton, Power and Tunstall which examine change over a 25-year period.¹² Community-sociological studies, focussing on detailed understanding of particular neighbourhoods, primarily used qualitative methods to describe and explain change in working-class areas, with work by Rex and Moore, Coates and Silburn, and Damer being significant.¹³ Postwar housing clearance was examined by Young and Wilmott, and Dennis.¹⁴ Barke and Turnbull's study of Meadowell in South Shields attempted a longer historical view.¹⁵ The collection by Gordon *et al* is an example of city-based historical studies and Nevin brought a historical view to housing market change in Salford,

¹¹ John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, methods and new directions in the study of modern history* (5th edn.; London: Routledge, 2013), 83.

¹² Ruth Lupton, 'Poverty Street—The dynamics of neighbourhood decline and renewal', [academic study], Bristol: Policy Press, 2003; Anne Power and Rebecca Tunstall, 'Swimming Against the Tide: Polarisation or progress on 20 unpopular council estates, 1980–1995', [academic study], York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1995; Rebecca Tunstall and Alice Coulter, 'Twenty-five Years on Twenty Estates—Turning the Tide?', [academic study], Bristol: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2006.

¹³ M. Young and P. Wilmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London: Routledge, 1957); N. Dennis, *People and Planning: The sociology of planning in Sunderland* (London: Faber, 1972).

¹⁴ John Rex and Robert Moore, *Race, Community, and Conflict: A study of Sparkbrook* (Oxford: Institute of Race Relations, 1967); Ken Coates and Richard Silburn, *Poverty—The forgotten Englishmen* (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1983); Seán Damer, *From Moorepark to "Wine Alley": The rise and fall of a Glasgow housing scheme* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1989).

¹⁵ Michael Barke and Guy Turnbull, *Meadowell: The Biography of an "Estate with Problems"* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1992).

Manchester and Liverpool.¹⁶ Henderson *et al* examined the layering of ABIs in Salford and Wolverhampton.¹⁷

Although historically a town, Smethwick was portrayed in interviews as now ‘both a place and places’ and alternatively as a ‘collection of places’.¹⁸ Place can be a neighbourhood, town or city. Described as the ‘everyday life-world’ that creates social relations, the concept of neighbourhood, or ‘place’, carries a strong normative appeal.¹⁹ But as Kearns and Parkinson pointed out, ‘There is no single, generalisable interpretation of the neighbourhood’.²⁰ Severn argued: ‘Not every bunch of streets is a neighbourhood. It’s something to do with size; and in a subjective way, it’s to do with whether you can hold an image of a place in your head’.²¹ This suggests geography is a necessary, but not sufficient condition.²² Lepine, Smith *et al* defined neighbourhoods as ‘complex, dynamic, multidimensional and subjective constructs beyond merely geographic or administrative

¹⁶ George Gordon (ed.), *Regional Cities in the UK 1890–1980* (London: Harper and Row, 1986); Brendan Nevin, Peter Lee *et al.*, ‘Changing Housing Markets and Urban Regeneration: The case of the M62 Corridor (abridged version)’, [academic study], *Manchester/Liverpool II*, Berlin: Philipp Oswalt, 2004; Brendan Nevin and Philip Leather, ‘Understanding the Drivers of Housing Market Change in Britain’s Postindustrial Cities’, in Peter Malpass and Liz Cairncross (eds.), *Building on the Past: Visions of housing futures* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2006); Brendan Nevin, ‘Housing Market Renewal in Liverpool: Locating the gentrification debate in history, context and evidence’, *Housing Studies*, 25/5 (2010), 715–33.

¹⁷ Henderson, Bowlby *et al.*, ‘Salford Experience’; Steven Henderson, ‘An Evaluation of the Layering and Legacy of Area-based Regeneration Initiatives in England—the Case of Wolverhampton’, *Urban Studies*, 49/6 (2012), 1201–27.

¹⁸ Gary Bowman, ‘Interview with Author’, 4 February 2014; David Rhead, ‘Interview with Author’, 1 October 2013. Bowman was a senior council officer and Windmill Lane resident. Rhead worked at the Black Country Development Corporation and was later Senior Area Manager, Homes and Communities Agency.

¹⁹ Helen Sullivan and Marilyn Taylor, ‘Theories of “Neighbourhood” in Urban Policy’, in Ian Smith, Eileen Lepine *et al.* (eds.), *Disadvantaged by Where You Live? Neighbourhood governance in contemporary urban policy* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2007), 24.

²⁰ Ade Kearns and Michael Parkinson, ‘The Significance of Neighbourhood’, *Urban Studies*, 38/12 (2001), 2103–10, 2103 cited in Sullivan and Taylor, ‘Theories of “Neighbourhood”’, 21.

²¹ Alun Severn, ‘Interview with Author’, 29 January 2013. Severn was a social enterprise consultant and writer on race relations who grew up in Marshall Street, Smethwick.

²² Sullivan and Taylor, ‘Theories of “Neighbourhood”’, 23.

boundaries'.²³ Smethwick illustrates this complexity of place.²⁴ Although place may necessarily lack precision, it matters as the basis for attachment, interaction and lived experience.²⁵

Lepine, Smith *et al* offered a 'site', 'space' and 'sphere' conceptualisation of neighbourhood or place governance. The site is a defined location for top-down, externally-determined delivery of policies, services and initiatives, with political representation through ward councillors, but without any devolved governance. The space implies some granting of influence and local coordination. The sphere is the potential for collective action of various interests as 'co-production'.²⁶ Following local government reorganisation, Smethwick was merely a 'site' within Sandwell, albeit latterly with intermittent space and even sphere-related activity, a theme explored in the research.²⁷

How local government's mainstream services and regulatory functions; position as a public landlord and landowner; and in community and stakeholder relationships support places in the long-term are critical issues. The Lyons Review into local government alluded to this with its focus on strategic 'place-shaping'.²⁸ Although neighbourhood governance

²³ Eileen Lepine, Ian Smith *et al.*, 'Introduction: Neighbourhoods and Governance', in Ian Smith, Eileen Lepine *et al.* (eds.), *Disadvantaged by Where You Live? Neighbourhood governance in contemporary urban policy* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2007), 2.

²⁴ See Special Note 4: Defining Smethwick—Changing boundaries and area identity.

²⁵ Chris Khamis, 'Interviews with Author', 6 November 2013, 4 February 2014 and 3 March 2016; and Sullivan and Taylor, 'Theories of "Neighbourhood"', 23. Khamis was a fellow director of CSR Partnership with the author who particularly worked with the Smethwick Regeneration Partnership.

²⁶ Lepine, Smith *et al.*, 'Introduction', 12-3.

²⁷ As expressed by Uddin: 'To the local authority, Smethwick is just another place, something where a group of people live, that we need to provide services to'. Johur Uddin, 'Interview with Author', 10 July 2013. He was Chief Executive of Community Connect Foundation, which operated from the North Smethwick Resource Centre.

²⁸ Sir Michael Lyons, 'Place-Shaping: A shared ambition for the future of local government', [government report], Lyons Inquiry into Local Government, London: The Stationery Office, 2007, 3.

has attracted considerable attention, the enduring role of local government in the success or otherwise of 'place', especially across different, related places (or sites) in its jurisdiction, seems neglected in the literature; at least at the level of detailed local studies. This apparent gap is despite the conventional wisdom that 'governance matters'.²⁹ In this context, Kearns and Paddison viewed urban governance as 'an attempt to manage and regulate difference and to be creative in urban areas which are themselves experiencing considerable change'.³⁰ In doing so, local authorities face inherited institutional arrangements, policy preferences and cultural norms and factors that contribute to governance failure. This study contributes to academic understanding of wider urban change, using the example of Smethwick to examine the interaction of national policy, local practice and the particularity of place. 'Place' and how place is historically managed is consequently the locus for analysis: how local authorities 'make a difference' in the long-run.³¹ 'History matters' because important aspects of impact can only be understood in the unfolding of processes over time.³²

Smethwick is not the subject of recent doctoral research or wider academic attention. However, the first history of Smethwick was written by Hackwood in 1896.³³

Local historians active in the Smethwick Local History Society have undertaken extensive

²⁹ Alan Harding, Iain Deas *et al.*, 'Reinventing Cities in a Restructuring Region? The rhetoric and reality of renaissance in Liverpool and Manchester', in Martin Boddy and Michael Parkinson (eds.), *City Matters: Competitiveness, cohesion and urban governance* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2004), 34.

³⁰ A. Kearns and R. Paddison, 'New Challenges for Urban Governance', *Urban Studies*, 37/5–6 (2000), 845–50, 847; cited in Henderson, 'Wolverhampton', 1206.

³¹ Henderson, Bowlby *et al.*, 'Salford Experience', 1442.

³² Joel Rast, 'Why History (Still) Matters: Time and temporality in urban political analysis', *Urban Affairs Review*, 48/1 (2012), 3–36, 24; Paul Pierson, 'Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics', *The American Political Science Review*, 94/2 (2000), 251–67, 264.

³³ F. W. Hackwood, *Some Records of Smethwick*, ed. Alan Vernon (Studley: Brewin, 2001).

research from the Tudor period to the Second World War.³⁴ There was a detailed survey of Smethwick up to 1971 in the *Victoria County History*.³⁵ The West Midland group of planners highlighted land-use patterns in Smethwick in their survey of the conurbation.³⁶ Postwar undergraduate theses by Mann and Price traced its physical and economic evolution.³⁷ It featured in Moser's urban typology of British towns.³⁸ The 1964 general election result in Smethwick and related race issues attracted contemporary accounts.³⁹ Nonetheless, studies of issues affecting Smethwick such as economic decline, postwar housing, urban policy and the local political environment have not been identified. Addressing this gap, and analysing how these issues relate is a significant contribution to Smethwick's historiography and has wider academic and policy relevance.

The central research question is therefore: how effective has the policy and practice been of local authorities responsible for managing Smethwick since 1945? This question is addressed in three stages. Firstly, what were the structural economic and social drivers shaping Smethwick as an urban area? Secondly, what were the influences of national urban-related policy and central-local relations on Smethwick? Together, these identify the externally-driven environment. Thirdly, what was the local dimension, as revealed through

³⁴ Smethwick Local History Society, 'Publications Page', [showcase website], <<http://www.smethwicklocalhistory.co.uk/#/publications/4538071068>>, accessed 19 February 2016.

³⁵ G. C. Bough, M. W. Greenslade, and D. A. Johnson, 'Smethwick', in M. W. Greenslade (ed.), *History of the County of Stafford* (The Victoria History of the Counties of England, XVII; London: University of London, Institute of Historical Research, 1976).

³⁶ West Midland Group, *Conurbation: A Survey of Birmingham and the Black Country* (London: Architectural Press, 1948).

³⁷ Margaret B. Mann, 'Smethwick: A geographical study of land utilisation, 1800–1950', unpublished BA dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1950; Geoffrey Price, 'Smethwick: The evolution and modern character of an industrial county borough', unpublished BA dissertation, University of Leicester, 1963.

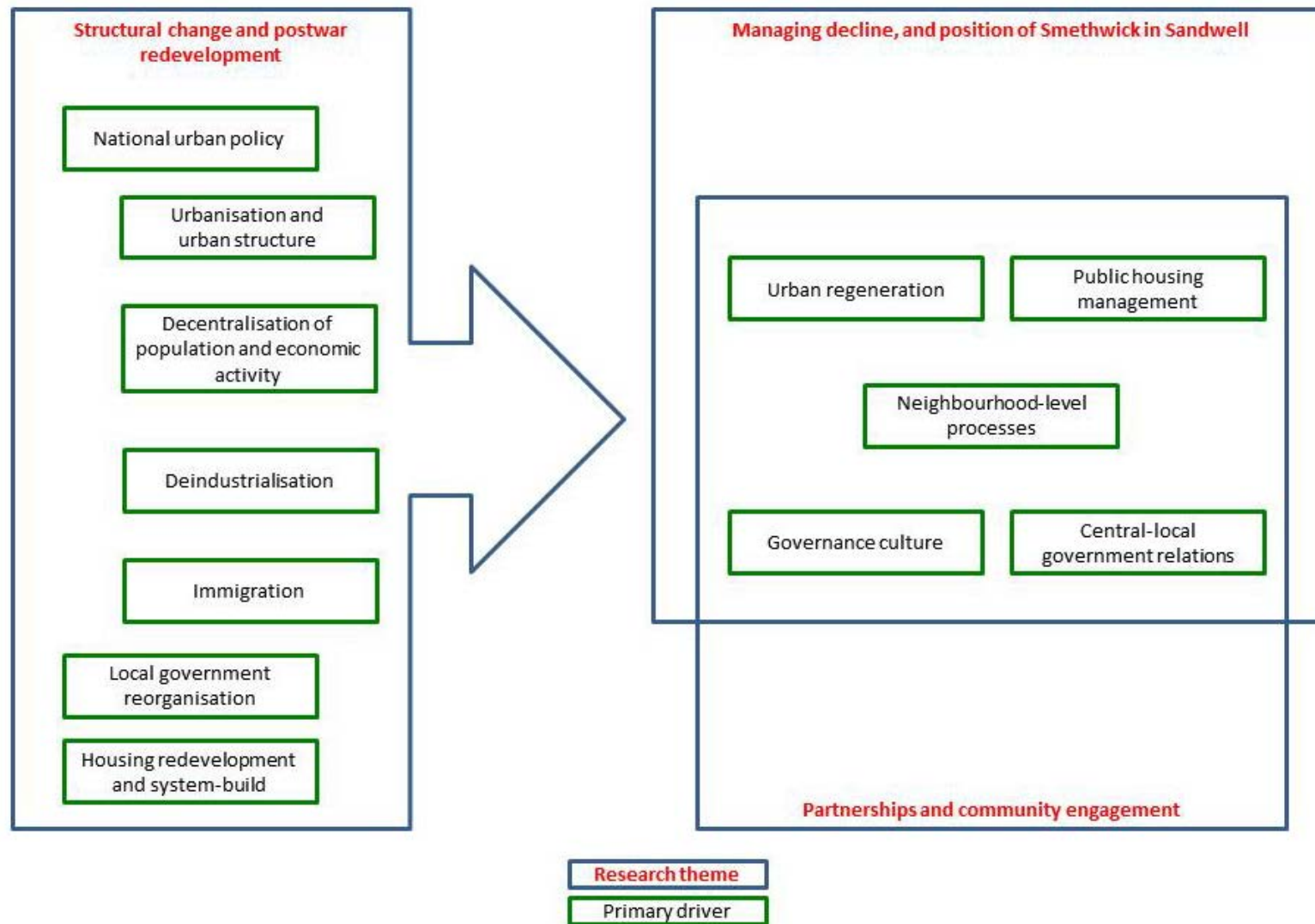
³⁸ Claus Moser and Wolf Scott, *British Towns: A statistical study of their social and economic differences* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1961).

³⁹ Paul Foot, *Immigration and Race in British Politics* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965); Peter Griffiths, *A Question of Colour?* (London: Leslie Frewin, 1966); Dhani R. Prem, *The Parliamentary Leper: A history of colour prejudice in Britain* (Aligarh: Metric, 1965).

the record of local housing and regeneration activity, with particular regard to the Windmill Lane and Black Patch areas of Smethwick?

The primary drivers affecting Smethwick since 1945, interlocking in nature, are identified (Figure 1.3). These are, respectively: urbanisation and urban structure; decentralisation of population and economic activity; deindustrialisation; immigration; local government reorganisation; housing redevelopment and system-build; national urban policy; public housing management; urban regeneration; governance culture; central-local government relations; and neighbourhood-level processes. Based on this analysis, it is argued the Smethwick experience can be understood through three themes: structural change and postwar redevelopment; managing decline, and the position of Smethwick in wider Sandwell; and partnerships and community engagement. Underlying the local dimension is a focus on inherited institutional arrangements, policy preferences and cultural norms. These themes guide subsequent chapters.

Figure 1.3: Research Themes and relationship to identified Drivers of Change affecting Smethwick



1.2 Research Methodology

This section discusses the methodology adopted for the study, including the benefits and potential limitations of each element. The approach requires a research method both qualitative and quantitative in nature. A major element is the recorded oral histories of key individuals involved in the governance of Smethwick. Another is the use of historical Geographic Information System (GIS) techniques to map changes in social, economic and environmental conditions and the outcomes of the forces shaping Smethwick. This is augmented by a wide variety of archival and documentary sources. The wider academic and policy literature is reviewed to provide context and comparison for the Smethwick experience.

The study reflects the personal experience, interest and networks of the author relating to Smethwick. He was born in Smethwick in 1964 and lived there until 1980 and from 1988 to 2000. He was a local authority councillor representing a Smethwick ward in 1988–96. He contributed to commercial regeneration consultancy projects for Smethwick in 1996–2007 and then worked in Smethwick at Urban Living, a local regeneration programme until 2010. Throughout this period as a practitioner he also collected evidence on changes in Smethwick, conducting interviews prior to this study as a participant observer. This experience directly led to this thesis: to harness this curiosity and connectedness and produce an academic study in the belief that Smethwick's history is both distinctive and has

a wider relevance. It also represents a subjectivity which Jones suggested 'cannot be left behind, cannot be left out'.⁴⁰

While the author has a first-hand view of otherwise unrecorded governance and implementation processes as well as a practical background in housing and regeneration, this carries the potential for conscious and unconscious personal bias. There is the further risk of his perceived bias by research participants and readers of the study. For example, an emotional bond with a place can also be seen as over-identification with the subject, where place is the locus of analysis. One interviewee described Smethwick as 'proud and mistreated'.⁴¹ However, the author feels about Smethwick in the same way as Parker and Long did in criticising nostalgic views of Birmingham: 'We belong to a generation that values the city precisely for the conflicts, contradictions and imperfections we had to negotiate while growing up'.⁴² The challenge is to harness this personal biography in a critical way.⁴³ It requires a continuously 'reflexive' process, particularly in oral history interviews. For Jones, reflexivity is concerned with the mechanisms involved in social interaction, including the analysis of people's assumptions, conventions and practices. It is not restricted to the planning and execution of a piece of research, but should be regarded as an integrated element of the writing process.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Marion Jones, 'The issue of Bias and Positionality in Cross-Cultural, Educational Studies: enhancing the validity of data through a reflective-reflexive approach, Higher Education Close-Up Conference 2, 16–18 July 2001, Lancaster University', [conference paper], 2001, 4.

⁴¹ Gerry Dawson, 'Interview with Author', 11 November 2013. Dawson was interim chief executive of Urban Living, the Birmingham-Sandwell housing market renewal pathfinder, from 2007-08.

⁴² Parker and Long, 'Reimagining Birmingham', 177.

⁴³ Joseph A. Maxwell, *Qualitative Research Design: An interactive approach* (3rd edn.; London: SAGE, 2012), 45.

⁴⁴ Jones, 'Bias and Positionality', 2.

Oral history aims to address what Tosh termed a 'reticence in conventional written sources' in a belief that it can 'show how things actually were'.⁴⁵ In tracing the strong recent contribution of oral history as a source and method, he identified some significant weaknesses in the approach. Memory, however precise and vivid, is filtered through subsequent experience, as testimony with hindsight.⁴⁶ Tosh contended that historical reality is more than the sum of individual experiences and consequent mental categories; it needs a broader range of evidence if the deeper processes and structures at work are to be explained.⁴⁷ But there is a value in gaining first-hand experience, especially in relation to choices and paths thought to be available to respective decision makers at key points in time. Thus the very subjectivity of informants can be the most important aspect of their testimony.⁴⁸ Thompson *et al* also identified the ability through oral history to recreate a multiplicity of standpoints.⁴⁹ Fundamentally, such accounts may be the only available source to illuminate the topic in question and this is certainly the case for Smethwick.

Oral history is a methodological process where each party to the interview is affected by the other; as Frisch put it, in 'shared authority'.⁵⁰ While the historian selects the informant and topics, their respective social positions affect the atmosphere of recall and discussion.⁵¹ Slim *et al* noted how the interview can place an unnatural pressure to find ready answers; to be concise in summarising a variety of complex experiences and intricate

⁴⁵ Tosh, '*Pursuit of History (5th edn.)*', 318-9.

⁴⁶ Tosh, '*Pursuit of History (5th edn.)*', 320.

⁴⁷ Tosh, '*Pursuit of History (5th edn.)*', 321.

⁴⁸ John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, methods and new directions in the study of modern history* (2nd edn.; London: Longman, 1991), 216.

⁴⁹ Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past* (2nd edn.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); included as Chapter 2 in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (eds.), *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998), 24.

⁵⁰ Cited in Tosh, '*Pursuit of History (5th edn.)*', 319.

⁵¹ Tosh, '*Pursuit of History (5th edn.)*', 319.

knowledge.⁵² The previous relationship of the author with most informants provided a source of empathy, trust and two-way challenge based on tacit understanding (positionality).⁵³ Yet it might also be source of bias, due to a shared identity, deep values and culture; and a familiarity where the switch in roles to a researcher might be even confusing.⁵⁴ There is a risk for the interviewer of accepting such testimony at face-value; rather than as with documentary sources, raw material for the writing of history.⁵⁵ Despite these potential problems, the existence of prior relationships with the author was the reason why informants such as retired council officers could be accessed for this research. It places a premium on careful planning and conducting of the interviews; and consciously achieving distance from the person.⁵⁶

Fifty-one people were interviewed about Smethwick.⁵⁷ They included councillors or others with a political background. The largest group were professional local government officers, both past and present. People who worked in other public agencies or community contexts, or ran social businesses or private companies and commercial consultancies were also interviewed. Some informants occupied more than one category. The sample was mainly white male and over the age of 50. One fifth had a Black and minority ethnic background compared to 63 per cent living in Smethwick in 2011. However, Grele argued

⁵² Hugo Slim and Paul Thompson, 'Ways of Listening', in Olivia Bennett and Nigel Cross (eds.), *Listening for Change: Oral history and development* (London: Panos, 1993); included as Chapter 10 in Perks and Thomson (eds.), *Oral History Reader*, 114.

⁵³ This included a continuum from close personal friendships, professional relationships that dated back to the author's time as councillor, to more recent contacts and association.

⁵⁴ Ping-Chun Hsiung, 'Lives and Legacies: A guide to qualitative interviewing', [academic website], <<http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~pchsiung/LAL/home>>, accessed 12 September 2014.

⁵⁵ Tosh, *Pursuit of History (5th edn.)*, 322.

⁵⁶ To address this issue, each interview write-up included a section termed 'positionality of author and participant'. Beliefs, assumptions and hypotheses derived from prior experience were regularly detailed and debated in the author's academic journal.

⁵⁷ See oral histories interviewee profile and short biographies at Appendix II.

that interviews should be selected not because they present some abstract statistical norm, but because they typify historical processes.⁵⁸ The sample was involved in the governance of Smethwick; they did not necessarily live in Smethwick. For example, it included six ward councillors successively serving the Soho and Victoria area and six consecutive officers responsible for housing strategy in Sandwell. The perspective of those affected as residents was included in the oral histories, but was not the primary focus.

The interview format was semi-structured around themes of place identity, governance, housing and regeneration, and changing local conditions. Historic maps generated through GIS used with historic locality photographs elicited views on Windmill Lane and Black Patch.⁵⁹ Conversation focused on what they thought and felt about the process of change and the available choices at the time. The discussion was allowed to diverge to uncover fresh (and unexpected) themes, linkages or causal factors. Recorded conversations were typically around two hours in duration. All were undertaken in line with accepted data protection and ethical research standards, including informed consent. Participants were sent a draft write-up to consider, which included verbatim quotations for potential use in the thesis. Agreement was gained on which of these could be personally attributed to them or could be used anonymously. Discussions included politically controversial and sensitive issues such as race politics. Care was taken to triangulate issues in follow-up discussions with several respondents and against contemporary accounts.

⁵⁸ Ronald J. Grele, 'Movement Without Aim: Methodological and theoretical problems in oral history', in R. J. Grele (ed.), *Envelope of Sound: The art of oral history* (Chicago, Ill: Precedent, 1985); included as Chapter 4 in Perks and Thomson (eds.), *Oral History Reader*, 41.

⁵⁹ See Niamh Moore-Cherry, Veronica Crossa, and Geraldine O'Donnell, 'Investigating Urban Transformations: GIS, map-elicitation and the role of the state in regeneration', *Urban Studies*, 52/12 (2015), 2134–50, 2147.

Documentary evidence, including archival and printed primary sources provides core information for Smethwick's recent history. It can also corroborate and augment evidence from other sources, and verify details from interviews. But such documentary material is normally written for some specific purpose and audience; as a communication among other parties attempting to achieve some other objectives.⁶⁰ Historic publications for the local authorities responsible for Smethwick, such as council newsletters, industrial and tenant handbooks were utilised, while recognising their original policy or promotional purpose. Archived local and national newspapers were important primary sources.⁶¹ Archived film footage of regional news illustrated issues like race and industrial disputes in the 1960s.⁶²

This historic material was augmented by a range of plans, strategies and studies relating to Smethwick and Sandwell. Their production gathered force in recent years, partly through more explicit and sophisticated policy development and evidence-based approaches with the growth of 'grey literature'.⁶³ To illustrate this shift, there is no reference to the word 'strategy' in the housing committee minutes of Smethwick Council

⁶⁰ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and methods* (London: SAGE, 1994), 82.

⁶¹ *Smethwick Telephone*, 1945–64; *Smethwick Telephone and Weekly Courier*, 1965–66; *Warley News Telephone*, 1967–73; *News Telephone*, 1974–75 and 1983–89; *Smethwick News Telephone*, 1976–82 all from Sandwell Community History and Archives Service; *The Guardian* (1959–2003), <<http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.bham.ac.uk/publication/35251/citation/85D242FB8B8D4AE3PQ/1?accountid=8630>>, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Guardian (1821–2003), ProQuest; *Financial Times Historical Archive*, 1888–2010, <<http://gale.cengage.co.uk/financial-times-historical-archive.aspx>>, Gale Digital Collections, Gale; *Daily Mail Historical Archive 1896–2004*, <<http://gale.cengage.co.uk/daily-mail-historical-archive.aspx>>, Gale Digital Collections, Gale.

⁶² Media Archive for Central England, 'MACE home page', [showcase website], <<http://www.macearchive.org/home.html>>, accessed 13 June 2013.

⁶³ 'Grey' literature is 'manifold document types produced on all levels of government, academics, business and industry in print and electronic formats that are protected by intellectual property rights, of sufficient quality to be collected and preserved by library holdings or institutional repositories, but not controlled by commercial publishers, that is, where publishing is not the primary activity of the producing body': Oxford University Press, *New Hart's Rules: The Oxford Style Guide*, ed. Anne Waddingham (2nd edn.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 367-8.

from 1945 to 1966.⁶⁴ From the 1980s, commercial consultancies produced large numbers of masterplans, heritage assessments, market studies, government grant funding bids, project appraisals and programme evaluations. Sixty area plans for Smethwick were identified.⁶⁵ They are variable in quality, but their snapshots sometimes provide the only insight into local conditions at important phases of change in the last 30 years.

Some important council documents and investment and management data was unavailable.⁶⁶ Neither national government nor the council locally could identify the type, location and value of externally-funded past regeneration programmes in Sandwell.⁶⁷ Housing build, demolition and disposal data held by the Sandwell planning authority stretched back only to 1989. The council has not retained copies of management letters from the District Auditor from the 1980s and even copies of annual council budget books from 1975 were only accessed with difficulty.⁶⁸ This problem was mitigated by the author's past collecting activity and fortuitous and generous loan of materials by ex-officers, but it underlines the importance of the oral history accounts.

A further primary source was the Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, with its volunteer-run museum of artefacts in Victoria Park and its regular roadshows and

⁶⁴ Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', [council report], Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, [1945–66].

⁶⁵ See Special Note 29: Smethwick 'Masterplans' and their Legacy.

⁶⁶ Loss of documentary evidence may be partly due to the organisational impact of successive restructuring, leading to staff turnover and office relocation which has accelerated the disposal of data. But it was exacerbated by a new policy to retain data for only 5–6 years, with an apparent failure to archive by depositing items at the council archive at Smethwick library, where cataloguing resources are also limited.

⁶⁷ Department of Communities and Local Government, 'Response to Mr Adam Carey Fol request – Ref F0007463 on Sandwell urban regeneration funding', [personal communication to author], 31 January 2014; Hayley Insley, 'Smethwick and Sandwell area-based initiatives and SMBC funding', [personal communication to author], 8 November 2013.

⁶⁸ Georgina Wythes, 'Audit Commission/District Auditor Management Letter—Freedom of Information Request 1-301504014', [personal communication to author], 14 March 2013.

newsletters.⁶⁹ Its *Facebook* page had 3,500 members at February 2016, attracting photographs, personal testimonies and memories of living and working in Smethwick.⁷⁰ These images add to the legacy of the Smethwick Photographic Society from the 1920s, in particular Russell's post-war contribution.⁷¹ They enhance understanding of past environments, albeit only as 'indirect evidence'.⁷² As Baker put it, they 'miraculously preserve traces of light which illuminates the present'.⁷³ They do not, though, 'show how things actually were' in what she called the 'whole ambience and complexity'.⁷⁴ Reflecting on her street photography of Salford in the 1960s, Baker remarked they included details she neither noticed nor wanted at the time.⁷⁵ Their original capture and any later treatment or selection can also be drawn to the 'drama of extremes'.⁷⁶ This study makes extensive use of neighbourhood images, mainly in relation to Windmill Lane and Black Patch (some taken by the author) but in conjunction with maps. These give context to otherwise partial and even confusing scenography; equally maps otherwise downplay the dwelling in nearness of multi-storey living.

⁶⁹ See SHCT website: Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, 'Smethwick Heritage Centre—Museum in the Park', [showcase website], <<http://www.smethwick.org.uk/>>, accessed 19 February 2016. For example, the 1950 Mann study was available for this research because a copy was presented to SHCT by Margaret B. Dutton (nee Mann) in 2001.

⁷⁰ Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, 'Smethwick Heritage Centre', *Facebook* [showcase website], <<https://www.facebook.com/groups/493620380687527/>>, accessed 19 February 2016.

⁷¹ Many have been published in successive collections: Joe Russell and Alton Douglas, *Joe Russell's Smethwick* (West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 1984); John Maddison, *Smethwick in Old Photographs* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1989); John Maddison, *Oldbury and Rowley Regis in Old Photographs* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1991) —this covers the area incorporated into Smethwick in 1927; David Bryant and Maureen Waldron, *Our Smethwick in Photographs* (Smethwick: Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, 2000); Andrew Maxam, Alan Reynolds *et al.*, *Warley Woods, Smethwick: Centenary of the People's Park—An illustrated history* (Smethwick: Crown Cards, 2006); Andrew Maxam and David Harvey, *Smethwick* (Stroud: Tempus, 2007).

⁷² Stuart Hall, 'Preface' in Paul Gilroy, *Black Britain: A Photographic History* (London: Saqi, 2007), 5-10 cited in David Parker and Christian Karner, 'Remembering the Alum Rock Road: Reputational geographies and spatial biographies', *Midland History*, 36/2 (2011), 292-309, <<http://www.maneyonline.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1179/004772911X13074595849275>>, accessed 15 December 2014, 297.

⁷³ Shirley Baker, *Streets and Spaces: Urban Geography* (Salford: Lowry Press, 2000), 9.

⁷⁴ To again use Tosh's expression in relation to oral history. Baker, *'Streets and Spaces'*, 9.

⁷⁵ Baker, *'Streets and Spaces'*, 9.

⁷⁶ Parker and Long, 'Reimagining Birmingham', 159.

Of course, as Foxall observed about maps of London through time: ‘the map as a scaled replica of the entire city, presents a choice to its maker: not what to include, but rather, what to exclude . . . It is often the concision required to encapsulate all relevant information on a single sheet that makes them so fascinating and telling.’⁷⁷ Hindle similarly remarked that the value of a map also lies in the perception it records. Like other examples of documentary evidence, what a map shows depends on its original purpose. By necessity as well as choice, they exaggerate certain features and reduce or ignore others.⁷⁸ Maps are propositions.⁷⁹ They involve the conscious selection of variables, including area boundaries, which while insightful may be also seen as value judgments on issues such as deprivation and contributing to area stigma.⁸⁰ These embody the underlying values of the evaluator, requiring different perspectives about what is ‘good’ and ‘bad’ neighbourhood change to be considered.⁸¹

Maps have always illustrated physical constructs and human use, and their temporal specificity is invaluable to historians. However, the application of GIS techniques to historical study is recent. For Knowles, ‘Geography is the study of spatial differentiation and history the study of temporal differentiation. GIS provides the tools to combine them to study patterns of change over space and time’.⁸² GIS is a software technology that combines interactive maps with a relational database containing large amounts of data. It enables

⁷⁷ Simon Foxall, *Mapping London: Making sense of the city* (London: Black Dog, 2007), 8, 16.

⁷⁸ Paul Hindle, *Maps for Local History* (London: Batsford, 1988), 7.

⁷⁹ Moore-Cherry, Crossa *et al.*, ‘Urban Transformations’, 2137.

⁸⁰ Erin K. Sharpe, ‘Targeted Neighbourhood Social Policy: A critical analysis’, *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*, 5/2 (2013), 158–71; 162, 166, 170.

⁸¹ Ruth Lupton and Anne Power, ‘What we know about Neighbourhood Change: A literature review’, [academic study], *CASE Report 27*, London: London School of Economics and Political Science, Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, 2004, 15.

⁸² Anne Kelly Knowles, *Past Time, Past Place: GIS for history* (Redlands, CA: ESRI, 2002), xii.

multiple quantitative layering using a variety of colours, shapes and mapping labels. But the GIS map is not just for looking at; it is a dynamic database, made for asking and investigating questions by zooming in and out, seeking different locations, turning layers of data on and off, and making queries to get specific information about a place.⁸³ GIS enables dynamic views in time-series of maps. It provides the 'visual way of knowing', since the eye leaps synoptically to areas of concentration and difference. In this way, it reveals patterns and relationships that may otherwise remain undetectable within tabular data. Complexity and detail is preserved, but it is possible to view different urban elements in isolation and in context alongside each other.⁸⁴

The best single source of longitudinal data on changing local conditions is the Census of Population, but Smethwick ended as a reporting geography after the 1961 census. Yet using GIS, small area-level data and boundaries from the census for the subsequent 1971 to 2011 period can be closely matched to historic Smethwick and for selected measures, Salford. The result is a consistent set of indicators dating back to the nineteenth-century covering total population, immigration and ethnicity, housing stock and household tenure, and economic activity alongside the particular evolution of the urban form and changing administrative boundaries.⁸⁵

⁸³ 'What is GIS?', *GIS for History: University of Illinois at Chicago* [academic website], (updated 21 October 2008) <<http://www.gisforhistory.org/info/whatisgis.php>>, accessed 1 August 2014.

⁸⁴ Anne Kelly Knowles, 'Introduction', *Social Science History*, 24/3 (2000), 451–70, 460.

⁸⁵ The evolution of Smethwick as mapped through GIS is discussed in SN 4: Defining Smethwick. The basis of longitudinal socio-economic analysis is set out in Special Note 5: Creating a Population time series for historic Smethwick. Housing trends are outlined in Special Note 6: Housing data for Smethwick. Also see Special Note 7: Comparative data for historic Salford.

Conclusions

This introductory chapter outlines the approach and methodology deployed to understand the effectiveness of the policy and practice of local authorities responsible for managing Smethwick since 1945. Three stages of analysis are accordingly identified, together with the themes and principal issues to be explored. Although the recent past, this history includes previously unrecorded processes and is affected by data gaps. The research question requires a multidisciplinary approach, with both qualitative and quantitative research methods to connect social, economic and political issues in conjunction with the physical environment.⁸⁶ Here, the use of historical GIS techniques to map changes in local conditions is a critical element. The author's participant observer position is also significant, due to long-term personal archiving and the ability to access and meaningfully interview key individuals involved in the governance of Smethwick, but a continuously reflexive approach is therefore also required.

The next chapter draws on the academic literature on governance, central-local relations, urban-related policy including housing and regeneration, together with explanations of urban change. Chapter 3 examines the impact on Smethwick of structural socio-economic drivers. Together, these represent the 'givens' at the local level.⁸⁷ Chapter 4 analyses local governance by successive local authorities as Smethwick eventually became part of Sandwell. The neighbourhood-level impact is illustrated in a detailed treatment of the Windmill Lane and Black Patch areas in Chapter 5. The concluding chapter evaluates the

⁸⁶ Dyer, Hopper *et al.*, 'Introduction', 5.

⁸⁷ The 'givens' is a term used in several places in the thesis, derived from Nevin's comment on structural and national policy influences: 'These drivers were given to local councillors, they didn't write them': Nevin, 'Interviews'.

long-term success and failure of managing a complex and dynamic area, together with an assessment of Smethwick in 2015 and likely future influences. It identifies the relevance of the Smethwick experience and this research to the wider understanding of urban processes and resulting public policy. The appendices include a chronology, a profile of oral history participants, and special notes on data sources, supporting evidence and related discussions.

CHAPTER 2 LOCAL GOVERNMENT, HOUSING AND URBAN POLICY— NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

National urban-related policy and central-local relations framed the governance of Smethwick and places like it. These and wider structural forces defined the externally-driven environment, or ‘givens’ locally. This chapter draws on the academic and ‘grey literature’ to place Smethwick in this national context. The chapter firstly examines the long-term role occupied by local authorities in governing places, in an environment of persistent government restructuring. It then discusses the physical impact and legacies of system-built housing redevelopment. Lastly, it evaluates urban policy in its varied and contested forms as a response to area decline.

2.1 Freedom to Act and Influence: Municipal labourism, local networks and austerity-localism

This section introduces the linked concepts of governance and policy that underpin the whole chapter. In particular, it discusses the historical evolution, changing role and structure, mentalities, resources and space available to local authorities as multi-functional, elected bodies in the leadership of place. It thereby explores the freedom to act resulting from the shifting nature of central government control; and the local ‘stickiness’ of inherited institutional arrangements and policy preferences and cultural norms.

Governance is the combination of rules, processes and structures operating to secure 'ordered rule'.¹ Described by Miller and Rose as the 'complex assemblage of diverse forces', it takes place, as Jessop put it, 'in the shadow of hierarchy'.² It is the dynamic interaction between quasi-governmental, private, non-profit, community and other actors; and local elected officials and the civic administration in the planning, decision-making, financing, and management of the affairs of the urban area.³ It is also underpinned by particular cultures or 'ways of thinking' about problems, choices and policy.⁴

Policy generally implies action in relation to a particular problem.⁵ But objective conditions are seldom 'so compelling and unambiguous that they set the policy agenda'.⁶ Rather, the 'language of policy and planning analysis not only depicts, but also constructs the issues at hand'.⁷ For Barrett and Fudge, policy is ambiguous: organisational action and reaction may determine policy as much as policy itself determines action and response.⁸ Attention should be paid to how 'administrative doctrines' gain ground to the exclusion of

¹ Eileen Lepine, Ian Smith *et al.*, 'Introduction: Neighbourhoods and Governance', in Ian Smith, Eileen Lepine *et al.* (eds.), *Disadvantaged by Where You Live? Neighbourhood governance in contemporary urban policy* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2007), 2.

² P. Miller and N. Rose, 'Governing Economic Life', *Economy and Society*, 19/1 (1990), 1–31; 2, cited in Rob Imrie, 'Governing the Cities and the Urban Renaissance', in Craig Johnstone and Mark Whitehead (eds.), *New Horizons in British Urban Policy: Perspectives on New Labour's urban renaissance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); 131; Bob Jessop, 'On Governance and Metagovernance: On reflexivity, requisite variety and requisite irony', (2002), 1–12, <<http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/resources/sociology-online-papers/papers/jessop-governance-and-metagovernance.pdf>>, accessed 18 February 2016, cited in Lepine, Smith *et al.*, 'Introduction', 8.

³ Enid Slack and André Côté, 'Comparative Urban Governance', [government report], *Foresight Future of Cities Working Paper*, London: Government Office for Science, 2015, 27.

⁴ Imrie, 'Governing the Cities'; 131.

⁵ David Mullins and Alan Murie, *Housing Policy in the UK* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2006), 1–2.

⁶ G. Majone, *Evidence, Argument and Persuasion in the Policy Process* (London: Yale University Press, 1989), 24; cited in Lepine and Sullivan, 'More Local than Local', 84.

⁷ F. Fischer and J. Forester (eds.), *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis and Planning* (London: UCL Press, 1993), 1; cited in Lepine and Sullivan, 'More Local than Local', 84.

⁸ Susan Barrett and Colin Fudge, 'Reconstructing the Field of Analysis', in Susan Barrett and Colin Fudge (eds.), *Policy and Action: Essays on the implementation of public policy* (London: Methuen, 1981), 251.

alternatives. This includes appeals to ‘crisis’ as well as ‘newism’ as ‘keys to persuasion’.⁹

The policy process is consequently a zone where political power, ideology and cultural values collide, and are contested.¹⁰ Policy is not apolitical or amoral in content; rather it lays claim to a moral authority, just as it can offer the possibility of a panacea.¹¹ But policy is inevitably modified and over time ‘the vast majority of policies fail to some extent’.¹² In analysing governance failure, Jessop identified factors such as the existence of multiple objectives over extended spatial and temporal horizons; that goals may be contradictory or inherently infeasible; that internal and external resistance occurs; and ‘bounded rationality’: limited information, uncertainty and time pressures when acting.¹³ ‘Clumsy solutions’ alternatively highlight the good sense inherent in the seemingly-messy ways of decision-making.¹⁴ Governance also occurs within changing economic and financial latitudes.¹⁵

⁹ Lepine and Sullivan, 'More Local than Local', 85, 98.

¹⁰ Craig Johnstone and Mark Whitehead, 'Horizons and Barriers in British Urban Policy', in Craig Johnstone and Mark Whitehead (eds.), *New Horizons in British Urban Policy: Perspectives on New Labour's urban renaissance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 7.

¹¹ Imrie, 'Governing the Cities', 130-1.

¹² D. Marsh and R. Rhodes, *Implementing Thatcherite Policies* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992), 9; quoted in Peter Malpass, 'Path Dependence and the Measurement of Change in Housing Policy', *Housing, Theory & Society*, 28/4 (2011), 305–19, 309. The view that policy is ‘inevitably modified’ is from P. Malpass and A. Murie, *Implementing Housing Policy* (4th edn.; London: Macmillan, 1999), 190; and quoted by Steven Tiesdell, 'A Forgotten Policy? A Perspective on the Evolution and Transformation of Housing Action Trust Policy 1987–99', *International Journal of Housing Policy*, 1/3 (2001), 357–83, 358.

¹³ Bob Jessop, 'Governance Failure', in Gerry Stoker (ed.), *The New Politics of British Local Governance* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 16.

¹⁴ Michael Thompson and M. Bruce Beck, 'Coping with Change: Urban resilience, sustainability, adaptability and path dependence', [government report], *Foresight Future of Cities Working Paper*, London: Government Office for Science, 2015, 9.

¹⁵ Alan Harding, Brendan Nevin *et al.*, 'Cities and Public Policy', [government report], *Foresight Future of Cities Working Paper*, London: Government Office for Science, 2015, 5.

Henderson *et al* in examining Salford referred to the potential for past governance decisions and relationships to generate ‘path-dependencies’.¹⁶ Here, ‘the impact of decisions made in the past persists into the present and defines the alternatives for the future’.¹⁷ Such perspectives emphasise the ‘stickiness’ of inherited institutional arrangements to become self-reinforcing.¹⁸ Path-dependence is consistent with a view of ‘punctuated-equilibrium’, or periods of prolonged stability separated by short and intense episodes of change.¹⁹ Such ‘critical junctures’ result from some cleavage or crisis that disrupts existing arrangements and creates opportunities for innovation and change.²⁰ Mahoney argued such an event is itself often a ‘conjuncture’: the coming together of two or more prior, separately-determined sequences to produce a new, distinct trajectory.²¹ Pierson and Kay identified weaker forms of path-dependence as ‘bounded choices’ about change within limits, rather than deterministic relationships.²² Rast also suggested that critical junctures gain more academic attention than the legacies of such events.²³

¹⁶ Steven Henderson, Sophie Bowlby, and Mike Raco, 'Refashioning Local Government and Inner-city Regeneration: The Salford Experience', *Urban Studies*, 44/8 (2007), 1441–63, 1446–7.

¹⁷ James Mahoney, 'Path Dependence in Historical Sociology', *Theory and Society*, 29/4 (2000), 507–48, 510.

¹⁸ Joel Rast, 'Why History (Still) Matters: Time and temporality in urban political analysis', *Urban Affairs Review*, 48/1 (2012), 3–36, 17–19;

¹⁹ Malpass, 'Path Dependence and Housing Policy', 308.

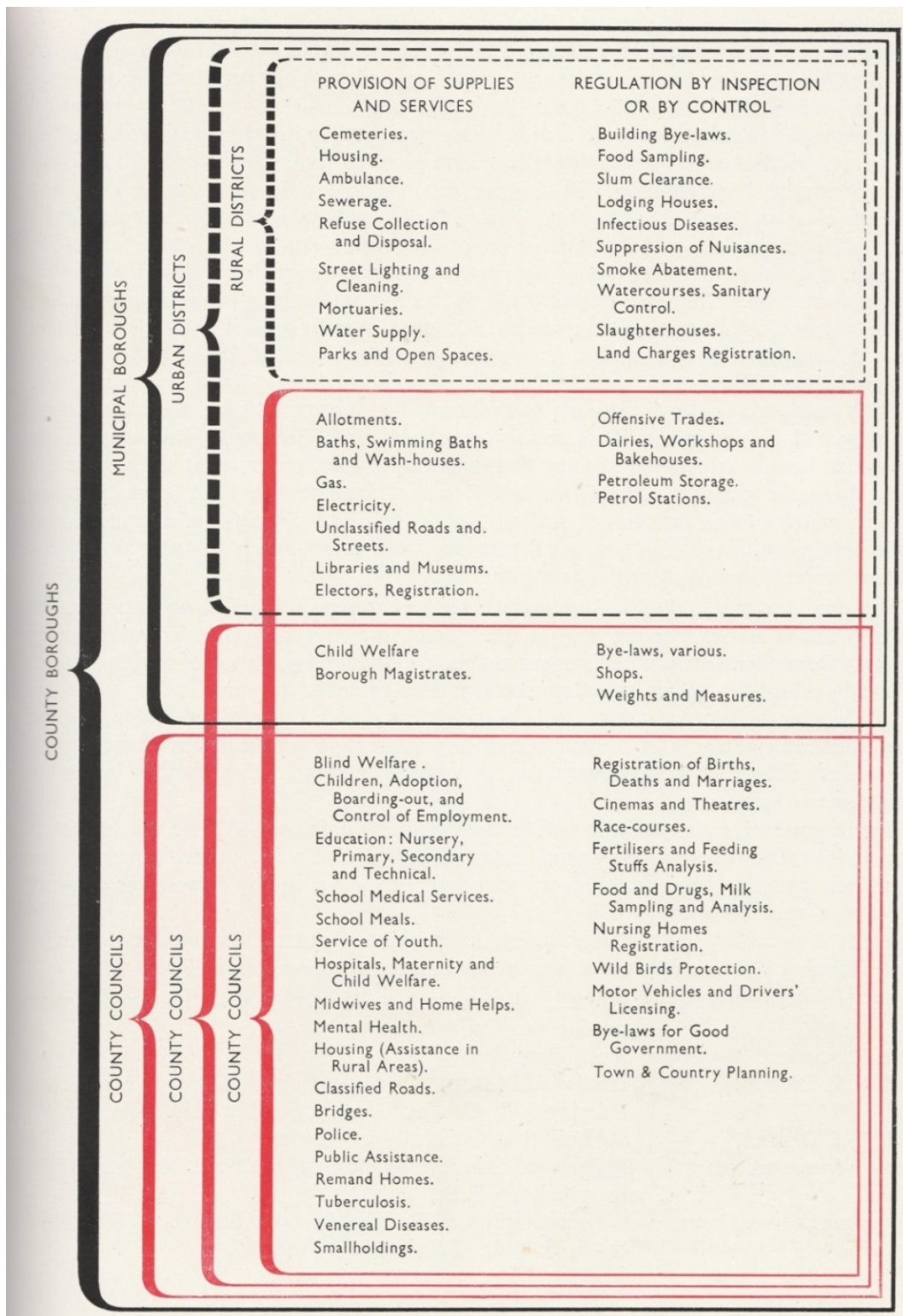
²⁰ Rast, 'Why History (Still) Matters', 9.

²¹ Mahoney, 'Path Dependence', 527–8.

²² Paul Pierson, 'Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics', *The American Political Science Review*, 94/2 (2000), 251–67, 265; Adrian Kay, 'A critique of the use of Path Dependency in Policy Studies', *Public Administration*, 83/3 (2005), 553–71, 554. Also see Malpass, 'Path Dependence and Housing Policy', 307.

²³ Rast, 'Why History (Still) Matters', 12.

Figure 2.1: English Local Government Functions in 1945



Source: 'English Local Government Functions in 1945', [Map], from West Midland Group, *Conurbation: A Survey of Birmingham and the Black Country*, 1948, Table IV, 51. © Royal Institute of British Architects. Reproduced with permission of British Architectural Library, RIBA: Jonathan Makepeace, 18 February 2016.

Critical to the development of the local state were the pressures of early urbanisation and industrialisation.²⁴ Legislation in 1835 produced bodies that could run local services in an integrated fashion. This ushered in the nineteenth-century development of multi-functional, local public authorities subject to Parliament and under democratic control.²⁵ The Local Government Act of 1888 led to a recognisable system of local government from 1894, including Smethwick.²⁶ Larger towns and cities were mostly covered by all-purpose (unitary) county boroughs (Figure 2.1).²⁷ Although many authorities covered small areas, they enjoyed a council-wide public connection and embodied civic pride.²⁸ Wilson and Game identified a high-water mark of legitimacy and influence in the early 1930s.²⁹ However, decision-making became more nationalised through welfare legislation and national wage bargaining, aided by the development of national bodies. This was driven in part by wartime exigencies after 1914 and the difficulties of postwar economic restructuring.³⁰ The transfer of key civic functions to the central state during and after the Second World War was a watershed, according to Clark.³¹ Local authorities nonetheless

²⁴ J. A. Chandler, *Explaining Local Government: Local government in Britain since 1800* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 1.

²⁵ Peter John, 'The Great Survivor: The persistence and resilience of English local government', *Local Government Studies*, 40/5 (2014), 687–704, 689. The legislation was the Municipal Corporations Act 1835.

²⁶ Jeffrey Stanyer, 'Assessing the Local Government Act, 1888', *Local Government Studies*, 15/6 (1989), 23–35, 34; Lewis Baston, 'Labour Local Government 1900–1999', in Brian Brivati and Richard Heffernan (eds.), *The Labour Party—A Centenary History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 450; Sir Michael Lyons, 'Place-Shaping: A shared ambition for the future of local government', [government report], Lyons Inquiry into Local Government, London: The Stationery Office, 2007, 47. Following a local campaign, Smethwick joined five existing county boroughs in the conurbation created following the Local Government Act 1888, which had set a population threshold of 50,000.

²⁷ County boroughs were the only local authorities exercising the full range of powers accorded to local government. Elsewhere, responsibilities were divided between municipal boroughs, urban or rural districts on the one hand, and county councils on the other: West Midland Group, *Conurbation: A Survey of Birmingham and the Black Country* (London: Architectural Press, 1948), 50.

²⁸ Lepine and Sullivan, 'More Local than Local', 83–4.

²⁹ David Wilson and Chris Game, *Local Government in the United Kingdom* (5th edn.; Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2011), 59.

³⁰ Martin Daunton, 'Introduction', in Martin Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain—Volume III 1840–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 53.

³¹ Peter Clark, 'Preface by the General Editor', in Martin Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain—Volume III 1840–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), xix.

remained important providers of services, including new social services and leading housing redevelopment.³²

After 1919, 'Labour had arrived in the town halls'.³³ In 1945 it began a period of urban dominance that lasted until 1968.³⁴ The cultural basis of this political leadership lay in what Gyford termed 'municipal labourism'.³⁵ This stemmed from the Fabian-influenced 'compassionate professionalism' of prewar Labour local government.³⁶ It was consolidated in the postwar 'Fordist' model of social welfarism and universal public services.³⁷ A centralised, top-down approach to service design and delivery reflected the primacy of the producer interest of council managers and a highly-unionised workforce. The elected basis of local government informed a belief that it 'knew best': a paternalistic stance of 'looking after' people, with independent community action mistrusted.³⁸ Civic relationships were hierarchical, but also mediated by common backgrounds and informal networks. Baston referred to pre-1974 councils as 'very intimate institutions, where councillors, officers and manual workers were drawn from the same street and even families'.³⁹ But as Dunleavy found in Newham, the 'closed and strong authority' acted to exclude wider interest

³² Daunton, 'Introduction', 54.

³³ Baston, 'Labour Local Government', 451.

³⁴ Alan Willis, *Volume 8: County Borough Election Results in Great Britain 1945–1972 England: Salford-York, Scotland & Wales*, eds Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher (Twentieth Century Local Election Results; Plymouth: University of Plymouth, Elections Centre, 2011), xix.

³⁵ John Gyford, *The Politics of Local Socialism* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1985), 5.

³⁶ Baston, 'Labour Local Government', 456.

³⁷ Andrew Tallon, *Urban Regeneration in the UK* (2nd edn.; Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 17, 135-6; Keith Shaw and Fred Robinson, 'Learning from Experience? Reflections on two decades of British urban policy', *The Town Planning Review*, 69/1 (1998), 49–63, 49.

³⁸ Henderson, Bowlby *et al.*, 'Salford Experience', 1452; Ian Cole and Robert Furbey, *The Eclipse of Council Housing* (London: Routledge, 1994), 78, 126; Alison Ravetz, *Council Housing and Culture: The history of a social experiment* (London: Routledge, 2001), 211.

³⁹ Baston, 'Labour Local Government', 452.

networks.⁴⁰ The way the governance culture of Smethwick also exhibited a municipal labourist approach is discussed in later chapters.

The 1974 local government reorganisation strengthened multifunctional capability. It reinforced dual political-bureaucratic control and the central operating core.⁴¹ Party politics centralised power: it was common in Labour local government for 'real power... to lie with a small number of councillors in key committees'.⁴² Green's study of Labour politics and the local state in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the 1970s showed the inner-workings of municipal labourism in the starkest of terms.⁴³ Chapter 4 discusses the equivalent in Sandwell. John argued political control hardened over time, notably through the 2000 legislation leading to 'cabinet' structures.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, larger, professionalised authorities required increasingly technical expertise in discrete departments, reinforced by professional networks. This meshed well with political control because chief officers and chairs of committees (and later cabinet members) formed close alliances defending their service.⁴⁵ Later internal reorganisations typically consolidated traditionally separate service departments into huge directorates dealing with so-called cross-cutting issues: people, place and economy being commonplace.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Patrick Dunleavy, *The Politics of Mass Housing in Britain, 1945–1975: a study of corporate power and professional influence in the welfare state* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), 335.

⁴¹ John, 'Great Survivor', 692, 698.

⁴² P. Lawless and F. Brown, *Urban Growth and Change in Britain* (London: Paul Chapman, 1986), 147 cited in Henderson, Bowlby *et al.*, 'Salford Experience', 1443.

⁴³ David G. Green, *Power and Party in an English city: An account of single-party rule* (2nd edn.; London: Routledge, 2007); D. G. Green, 'Inside Local Government: A study of a ruling Labour group', *Local Government Studies*, 6/1 (1980), 33–49.

⁴⁴ John, 'Great Survivor', 690, 696; Chris Collinge, 'Political Power and Corporate Managerialism in Local Government: The organisation of executive functions', *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 15/3 (1997), 346–61: 354, 359. Also see Slack and Côté, 'Urban Governance', 28.

⁴⁵ John, 'Great Survivor', 691; Wilson and Game, 'Local Government', 104.

⁴⁶ Wilson and Game, 'Local Government', 105.

After 1945, there was a complex assortment of 1,302 English local government units falling into nine separate categories and the need for reform was acute.⁴⁷ Urban authorities had been overlain on an administrative geography that predated the industrial revolution and reflected historic counties. The urban governance system suffered from poor economies of scale; overly-tight boundaries; complexity and confusion about service responsibility; and high dependence on external funding.⁴⁸ Postwar economic and social decentralisation sharpened structural problems.⁴⁹ Yet government boundaries are difficult to alter, only changing occasionally 'in big leaps, and often after complex procedures'.⁵⁰ The eventual local government reorganisations in 1965–74 which affected Smethwick sought a workable trade-off between the functional effectiveness and efficiency of larger units; and the democratic agenda of identity and responsiveness associated with smaller units.⁵¹ Reorganisation was pursued in conjunction with the professionalisation of local government management under a chief executive model, following the Maud and Bains reports.⁵² Yet new councils including Sandwell had trouble establishing local loyalties (Chapter 4).⁵³

Local freedom to act was expressed by Jessop *et al* as: 'while there is clearly scope for political agency in the urban domain, at the same time this is systematically structured by wider economic and regulatory relations'.⁵⁴ As seen, increasing national direction of

⁴⁷ Harding, Nevin *et al.*, 'Cities and Public Policy', 22.

⁴⁸ Harding, Nevin *et al.*, 'Cities and Public Policy', 22.

⁴⁹ Rob Atkinson and Graham Moon, *Urban Policy in Britain: The City, the State and the Market* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), 3; Wilson and Game, 'Local Government', 60.

⁵⁰ OECD, 'Competitive Cities in the Global Economy', [opinion piece], Paris: OECD, 2006, 157 quoted in Slack and Côté, 'Urban Governance', 12.

⁵¹ 'All change in local affairs', *The Times*, 1 April 1974; Harding, Nevin *et al.*, 'Cities and Public Policy', 23.

⁵² Wilson and Game, 'Local Government', 107.

⁵³ Baston, 'Labour Local Government', 464.

⁵⁴ Bob Jessop, Jamie Peck, and Adam Tickell, 'Retooling the Machine: Economic crisis, state restructuring, and urban politics', in A. E. G. Jonas and D. Wilson (eds.), *Urban Growth Machine: Critical perspectives two decades*

local government from the 1920s progressively impinged on urban areas, although it brought greater exchequer support.⁵⁵ Nationalisation lost it the utilities in the 1940s, but it gained a significant role in delivering welfare services delegated to it by central government.⁵⁶ As the next section shows, it also became a public landlord, housing most of the population in central areas.⁵⁷ Local government accounted for almost a third of public spending by 1970.⁵⁸ Subsequent financial and economic crises led to a shift in central-local relations.⁵⁹ Privatisation and marketisation policy reduced the direct powers formerly exercised by councils in services such as housing, education, leisure and social services.⁶⁰ Local government nevertheless gained roles in economic development, European programmes and community safety, as well as area-based initiatives.⁶¹ But spending was capped and precise legal supervision introduced.⁶² New Labour strengthened performance monitoring through targets and auditing and used centrally-funded initiatives as leverage.⁶³ The notion of granting (or returning) powers to councils went hand-in-hand with pressure in turn to devolve them to neighbourhoods and citizens, although this was not embedded.⁶⁴

later (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999), 159; quoted by Henderson, Bowlby *et al.*, 'Salford Experience', 1446.

⁵⁵ Anthony Sutcliffe and Roger Smith, *Birmingham 1939–1970* (History of Birmingham, Vol. III; London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 37.

⁵⁶ Lepine and Sullivan, 'More Local than Local', 83; John, 'Great Survivor', 690; Baston, 'Labour Local Government', 450.

⁵⁷ Anne Power and Katharine Mumford, 'The Slow Death of Great Cities? Urban Abandonment or Urban Renaissance', [academic study], York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1999, 69.

⁵⁸ Michael Parkinson, 'The Thatcher Government's Urban Policy, 1979–1989: A review', *The Town Planning Review*, 60/4 (1989), 421–40, 425.

⁵⁹ Lyons, 'Place-Shaping', 40.

⁶⁰ Parkinson, 'Thatcher Government's Urban Policy', 438.

⁶¹ Murray Stewart, 'Ten Years of Inner Cities Policy', *The Town Planning Review*, 58/2 (1987), 129–45, 131; John, 'Great Survivor', 695.

⁶² Gill Bentley and Lee Pugalís, 'New Directions in Economic Development: Localist policy discourses and the Localism Act', *Local Economy*, 28/3 (2013), 257–74, 261.

⁶³ John, 'Great Survivor', 694; Imrie, 'Governing the Cities', 138.

⁶⁴ Lepine and Sullivan, 'More Local than Local', 84.

The Lyons Review concluded that the 'scope for local choice has, as a result, been significantly reduced'.⁶⁵

Nearly 5,000 'unelected bodies spending public money' were created by 2000, often to manage functions transferred from local councils.⁶⁶ This expansion of special purpose vehicles, partnerships, private and social enterprise activity saw local authorities becoming one of many 'players' in local service planning and delivery. It led to a focus on 'enabling or 'steering' local activity.⁶⁷ Stoker termed this a shift to 'network governance', requiring a 'different operating code'.⁶⁸ However, John argued that these changes, while significant, did not lead to irrelevance or diminution locally. Local government remained at the centre of 'new networks': retaining resources, capacity and legitimacy to lead. Short-life quangos (even government-imposed ones) had symbiotic relationships with councils. Local authorities knew how to manage the relationship between 'hard' and 'soft' power and to create patterns of local leadership to balance-out local interests.⁶⁹

Precipitated by a major banking and finance crisis, 2010 represents an ideologically-driven breakpoint in the conduct of the state and the reshaping of central-local relations through 'risk-shift'.⁷⁰ Severe spending cuts were projected to last to 2020, although local government was deregulated to a degree and conurbation-based, combined authorities

⁶⁵ Michael Lyons, 'National Prosperity, Local Choice and Civic Engagement: A new partnership between central and local government for the 21st century', [government report], Lyons Inquiry into Local Government, London: The Stationery Office, 2006, Preface, 3.

⁶⁶ Slack and Côté, 'Urban Governance', 28-9; Wilson and Game, '*Local Government*', 155.

⁶⁷ Harding, Nevin *et al.*, 'Cities and Public Policy', 25.

⁶⁸ Gerry Stoker, *The New Politics of British Local Government* (Oxford: Macmillan, 2000), 98 cited in Lepine, Smith *et al.*, 'Introduction', 9.

⁶⁹ John, 'Great Survivor', 693-8.

⁷⁰ Patricia Kennett, Gerwyn Jones *et al.*, 'Recession, Austerity and the "Great Risk Shift": Local government and household impacts and responses in Bristol and Liverpool', *Local Government Studies*, 41/4 (2015), 622-44, 623; Darinka Asenova, Stephen Bailey, and Claire McCann, 'Managing Municipal Austerity: Mitigation of social risks', *Local Government Studies*, 41/1 (2014), 1-19, 4.

established.⁷¹ Such 'austerity-localism' nevertheless includes the threat of marginalisation for local government, where continued cuts undermine the principle of universal provision and the legitimacy conveyed by it; and councils' future adaptive capacity, leading to risk of service failures.⁷² The long-held ability of councils to provide place leadership, particularly in areas now undergoing complex change may be at stake.⁷³

To conclude this section, urbanisation necessitated municipal management and service delivery, originally for a multiplicity of (often new) places with considerable executive autonomy, but from the 1970s, in reorganised local government units and according to a policy and regulatory structure largely determined nationally. This review also demonstrates that despite central government fiat, councils avoided an agency role and retained a capacity over decades to drive multiple agendas.⁷⁴ The local dimension remained important, while exhibiting path-dependent behaviours contributing to governance failure. As such, it provides a yardstick to assess the local management of Smethwick by successive local authorities after 1945.

⁷¹ HM Treasury, 'Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015', [government report], *Cm 9162*, London: The Stationery Office, 2015, 100; Nick Bailey, Glen Bramley, and Annette Hastings, 'Symposium Introduction: Local responses to "Austerity"', *Local Government Studies*, 41/4 (2015), 571–81, 576; Centre for Cities, 'Cities Outlook 2015', [opinion piece], 8, London: Centre for Cities, 2015, 7, 24; 'The secret negotiations to restore Manchester to greatness', *Guardian*, 12 February 2015. The West Midlands Combined Authority will commence in 2016.

⁷² Annette Hastings, Nick Bailey *et al.*, 'Coping with the Cuts? The management of the worst financial settlement in living memory', *Local Government Studies*, 41/4 (2015), 601–21: 610, 616–7.

⁷³ See Special Note 3: Austerity and Local Government.

⁷⁴ Dennis Judd and Michael Parkinson, 'Leadership and Urban Regeneration', in Dennis Judd and Michael Parkinson (eds.), *Leadership and Urban Regeneration: Cities in North America and Europe* (London: SAGE, 1990), 15.

2.2 Local Government and Place: Slum clearance, mass housing and public landlordism

After illustrating the national housing policy dimension, this section traces how local authorities used their powers to comprehensively redevelop areas deemed 'slums', largely with system-built replacement housing later described as 'mass housing'. It discusses how local authorities managed this process and then operated as major public landlords. It is concerned with the impact of this activity on places and community relationships. One outcome was the advent of 'problem estates' in a sharpened neighbourhood hierarchy. An important theme, which continues to the end of the chapter, is consequently how problems are socially-constructed, how they appear on the policy agenda and how this changes over time.⁷⁵

Public policy strongly affected twentieth-century housing markets through planning, demolition, rent controls in private renting, ownership subsidies, provision of subsidised renting, and direct subsidies to individuals through tax relief.⁷⁶ After 1919, national government shouldered most of the build cost of council housing, which expanded from 12 to 25 per cent of the housing stock in 1947–61. The long-term fall in private renting accelerated postwar, from 61 to 15 per cent of housing nationally in 1947–70.⁷⁷ Rent controls discouraged investment and redevelopment directly removed substantial numbers

⁷⁵ Allan Cochrane, *Understanding Urban Policy: A critical approach* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 3; Atkinson and Moon, 'Urban Policy in Britain', 17. Also see Phil Jones, 'Historical Continuity and post-1945 Urban Redevelopment: The example of Lee Bank, Birmingham, UK', *Planning Perspectives*, 19/4 (2004), 365–89.

⁷⁶ Harold Carter, 'From Slums to Slums in Three Generations: Housing policy and the political economy of the welfare state, 1945–2005', *Discussion Papers in Economic and Social History*, 98 (2012), 1–53, 7–8; David Herbert, 'Towns and Cities', in Vince Gardiner and Hugh Matthews (eds.), *The Changing Geography of the United Kingdom* (3rd edn.; London: Routledge, 2000), 194.

⁷⁷ Herbert, 'Towns and Cities', 195–6.

of privately-rented stock.⁷⁸ The state later became the guarantor of a new generation of private landlords through the Housing Benefit system, with the cost doubling from £11bn to £22bn in 2000–10.⁷⁹ After 1979, the role of council housing was sharply reduced through sale to tenants and disposals, creating new local housing markets. This ran alongside low public and private new-build completions, partly due to ‘green-belt’ containment policies.⁸⁰ Population growth led to significant housing shortages: in 2012, 230,000 new households were formed nationally, with only 98,280 homes built.⁸¹ Consequent house price inflation led to an affordability crisis in the early twenty-first century.

The first national slum clearance campaign was launched in the 1930s and Lowe described it as a postwar ‘Big State’ policy.⁸² Clearance reached 1.9m homes, affecting 5.3m people.⁸³ Bomb damage, continued housing decay, rising expectations, desire for modernity and belief in technocratic and welfare solutions were driving factors.⁸⁴ Postwar shortages focused attention on (mainly council) new-build and emergency repair, not demolition.⁸⁵

⁷⁸ Power and Mumford, 'Slow Death of Great Cities', 67-8; Daunton, 'Introduction', 34-5; Ravetz, 'Council Housing and Culture', 104.

⁷⁹ Carter, 'From Slums to Slums', 46-7.

⁸⁰ Herbert, 'Towns and Cities', 194-6.

⁸¹ Katie Williams, 'Urban Form and Infrastructure: A morphological review', [government report], *Foresight Future of Cities Working Paper*, London: Government Office for Science, 2014, 19. Also see Tony Champion, 'People in Cities—The numbers', [government report], *Foresight Future of Cities Working Paper*, London: Government Office for Science, 2015, 5.

⁸² Stuart Lowe, 'Slums—Where they came from and what they are', [academic study], *Breaking-up Communities? The social impact of housing demolition in the late twentieth-century: Report of a study and information-sharing day, 2 November 2012*, York: University of York, Centre for Housing Policy, 2012.

⁸³ Clearance in 1930–45 totalled 340,961 (1,340,293 people); and 1945–54 89,858 (308,739): John English, Ruth Madigan, and Peter Norman, *Slum Clearance: the social and administrative context in England and Wales* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), 39. In 1955–85 some 1.48 million homes were cleared displacing 3.66m people: Jim Yelling, 'The Incidence of Slum Clearance in England and Wales, 1955–85', *Urban History*, 27/2 (2000), 234–54, 234.

⁸⁴ Atkinson and Moon, 'Urban Policy in Britain', 23; Anne Power, *Estates on the Edge: The social consequences of mass housing in Northern Europe* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 35; English, Madigan et al., 'Slum Clearance', 27.

⁸⁵ S. Millward, 'Housing Renewal in the Inner City', in H. P. White (ed.), *The Continuing Conurbation: Change and development in Greater Manchester* (Farnborough: Gower, 1980), 84; Cole and Furbey, 'Eclipse of Council Housing', 61-3.

But less than 10 per cent of inner Manchester-Salford housing had baths in 1945.⁸⁶ A renewed national clearance programme was launched in 1954 with encouragement to 'plan boldly and comprehensively'.⁸⁷ Sweeping clearance programmes addressed grossly-unfit stock, but concern mounted about community impact.⁸⁸ A slowdown in local authority new-build in the early 1970s prompted curtailment of demolitions.⁸⁹ A 'paradigm-shift' in national policy from slum clearance to improvement followed.⁹⁰ The government advised 'in the majority of cases, comprehensive redevelopment is no longer the answer'.⁹¹ Improvement grants were made and renewal programmes in general improvement and housing action areas declared.⁹² Clearance fell sharply, while continuing in selected areas, Smethwick being one.⁹³ The housing problem was now seen as a local issue; qualitative and occasionally quantitative in nature.⁹⁴

Local authorities were the driving force behind clearance programmes, working to formal procedures and demolition targets in five-year strategies approved by central government.⁹⁵ There was no formal consultation, and local debate was limited, with the local press being particularly uncritical.⁹⁶ It was seen as a technical exercise relating to

⁸⁶ Brian Rodgers, 'Manchester—Metropolitan planning by collaboration and consent; or civic hope frustrated', in George Gordon (ed.), *Regional Cities in the UK 1890–1980* (London: Harper and Row, 1986), 43.

⁸⁷ MHLG Circular 69/67: Housing Act 1957: Slum Clearance, HMSO 1967, cited in Michael S. Gibson and Michael J. Langstaff, *An Introduction to Urban Renewal* (London: Hutchinson, 1982), 41.

⁸⁸ Millward, 'Housing Renewal', 86. See Norman S. Power, *The Forgotten People: A Challenge to a Caring Community* (London: Arthur James, 1965).

⁸⁹ English, Madigan *et al.*, 'Slum Clearance', 37; Yelling, 'Slum Clearance', 236.

⁹⁰ Yelling, 'Slum Clearance', 248; English, Madigan *et al.*, 'Slum Clearance', 34-8.

⁹¹ 1973 policy statement quoted in Yelling, 'Slum Clearance', 236.

⁹² B. T. Robson, 'The County Housing Market', in H. P. White (ed.), *The Continuing Conurbation: Change and development in Greater Manchester* (Farnborough: Gower, 1980), 100; Yelling, 'Slum Clearance', 236; English, Madigan *et al.*, 'Slum Clearance', 43-4.

⁹³ Ian Cole, 'Housing Market Renewal and Demolition in England in the 2000s: The governance of "wicked problems"', *International Journal of Housing Policy*, 12/3 (2012), 347–66, 349.

⁹⁴ Millward, 'Housing Renewal', 86-7.

⁹⁵ Cole, 'Housing Market Renewal', 349.

⁹⁶ Dunleavy, 'Politics of Mass Housing', 351; Ravetz, 'Council Housing and Culture', 106.

condition and cost, with little evidence gathered on social impact or housing market dynamics.⁹⁷ Houses judged 'unfit for human habitation' in clearance areas were deemed worthless and compensated at 'cleared-site value' only.⁹⁸ Schemes included marginal and structurally-sound dwellings.⁹⁹ It is important to view Smethwick practices within this postwar local government norm.

As major landlords, councils were directly involved in the process of transition; rehousing displaced residents, for which they received government subsidy though initially not for clearance activity.¹⁰⁰ It acquired a momentum due to vested interests, including political parties, environment health officers, planners and architects.¹⁰¹ Major cities cleared 22 per cent of their housing stock in 1955–85 (Table 2.1). Clearance in Hulme-Moss Side, Manchester displaced 30,000 people.¹⁰² Blight was protracted and demolition created a new set of 'worst houses'.¹⁰³ However, the limited contemporary studies undertaken indicate a 'complex reality' of community experiences, with age and housing tenure important factors.¹⁰⁴ The degree of 'community break-up' appears unclear.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁷ Lowe, 'Slums'.

⁹⁸ Yelling, 'Slum Clearance', 243.

⁹⁹ Yelling, 'Slum Clearance', 245; Anne Power and John Houghton, *Jigsaw Cities Big Places, Small Spaces* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2007), 63.

¹⁰⁰ Cole, 'Housing Market Renewal', 349; English, Madigan *et al.*, 'Slum Clearance', 34.

¹⁰¹ Ravetz, 'Council Housing and Culture', 106; Power, 'Estates on the Edge', 37.

¹⁰² H. B. Rodgers, 'Manchester Revisited—A profile of urban change', in H. P. White (ed.), *The Continuing Conurbation: Change and development in Greater Manchester* (Farnborough: Gower, 1980), 27; Ravetz, 'Council Housing and Culture', 104.

¹⁰³ Robson, 'County Housing Market', 96-7, 101; Shirley Baker, *Streets and Spaces: Urban Geography* (Salford: Lowry Press, 2000), 4-5; Power and Mumford, 'Slow Death of Great Cities', 68; Power and Houghton, *Jigsaw Cities*, 62.

¹⁰⁴ Gibson and Langstaff, 'Urban Renewal', 44-5; and see Yelling, 'Slum Clearance', 251; English, Madigan *et al.*, 'Slum Clearance', 36.

¹⁰⁵ Rebecca Tunstall, 'The Evidence on Slum Clearance 1945–85 and what it tells us about the "Breaking up of Communities": Results of literature review', [academic study], *Breaking-up Communities? The social impact of housing demolition in the late twentieth-century: Report of a study and information-sharing day, 2 November 2012*, York: University of York, Centre for Housing Policy, 2012. Also see Cole and Furbey, 'Eclipse of Council Housing', 112.

Table 2.1: Slum Clearance in major English Cities, 1955–85

	Percentage of 1955 housing stock cleared (ranked)	Number of dwellings cleared
Manchester	35	73,536
Salford	33	30,926
Sheffield	30	46,559
Nottingham	30	27,802
Leeds	27	59,005
Liverpool	25	50,067
Hull	24	23,886
Bolton	23	19,895
Bradford	22	32,169
Birmingham	18	57,412
Stoke-on-Trent	18	15,005
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	17	17,415
Leicester	17	14,741
Sunderland	17	11,370
Portsmouth	13	8,377
Southampton	10	5,465
Bristol	7	7,861
Cardiff	7	4,408
Coventry	6	4,726
Total	22	510,625
<i>Smethwick</i>	28	6,050

Source: Adapted from Jim Yelling, 'The Incidence of Slum Clearance in England and Wales, 1955–85', *Urban History*, 27/2 (2000), 234–54, Table 4: Slum clearance in major cities, 242. Additional Smethwick data author's calculation. Also see Special Note 6: Housing data for Smethwick.

By 1960, many cities had exhausted their land supply for housing, particularly central areas such as Salford, Smethwick and inner-London boroughs. Higher densities were pursued through industrialised, system-built housing influenced by modernist urban design principles and the utopian inspiration of Le Corbusier (Figure 2.2 and Figure 2.3).¹⁰⁶ Such redevelopment was encouraged by government subsidy, which until 1966 increased with building height.¹⁰⁷ Ravetz argued local authorities had little choice but to use this subsidy

¹⁰⁶ Cole and Furbey, 'Eclipse of Council Housing', 107-8; Ravetz, 'Council Housing and Culture', 106-7.

¹⁰⁷ Dunleavy, 'Politics of Mass Housing', 37, 41.

and vested interests continued to propel activity.¹⁰⁸ Postwar redevelopment was mostly in Labour-controlled urban areas, but after 1968 the Tories followed the same policy. Various corruption scandals over build contracts marked the period.¹⁰⁹ Some 440,000 high-rise flats were constructed, overwhelmingly located in inner-urban areas and let mainly to those from slum housing.¹¹⁰ Birmingham built 463 high-rise blocks, including defective 'Bison' flats at Castle Vale.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Ravetz, *'Council Housing and Culture'*, 106.

¹⁰⁹ Baston, *'Labour Local Government'*, 461; Dunleavy, *'Politics of Mass Housing'*, 292-5.

¹¹⁰ Dunleavy, *'Politics of Mass Housing'*, 1, 31.

¹¹¹ Dunleavy, *'Politics of Mass Housing'*, 125.

Figure 2.2: Redevelopment area, Central Salford, 1955



Source: F. J Martin, 'St. Stephen Street, Salford, 1955', from www.salford.photos/index.php?irn=7531&mod=cat&mul=5931. © F. J. Martin, Manchester. Reproduced with permission of Salford Local History Library: Duncan McCormick, 12 February 2016.

Figure 2.3: Redevelopment area, Windmill Lane, Smethwick, c.1965



Source: Joe Russell, 'Messenger Road Redevelopment Area c.1965', from Joe Russell and Alton Douglas, *Joe Russell's Smethwick*, 1984, 40. © Sandwell MBC. Reproduced with permission of Alton Douglas Books: Alton Douglas, 11 February 2016. A remarkably similar scene to Salford above.

The Lancashire conurbations exemplify the complex interaction of slum clearance, resupply and the physical and management problems of mass housing. Manchester and Salford together demolished 104,462 houses in 1955–85, but adopted different rehousing strategies.¹¹² Manchester pursued dispersal, constructing 43 per cent of its housing outside the city and only latterly resorting to system-built housing.¹¹³ But planned decentralisation in Manchester was influenced by an erroneous 1965 study which overestimated the eventual regional population in 1981 by a million people.¹¹⁴ Salford rejected dispersal in the face of steepening population decline and built flats and tower blocks extensively on cleared land, comprising 43 per cent of total build.¹¹⁵ The design and build standard of their respective system-build ‘was in retrospect among the worst in the UK’.¹¹⁶ This included the ‘Precinct’ high-rise in central Salford; the deck access at the Manchester ‘forts’ in Beswick, Ardwick and Hulme; and the Radburn layout at Ordsall in Salford, and Harpurhey and Longsight in Manchester (Figure 2.4 and Figure 2.5).¹¹⁷ In Liverpool, governance failings exacerbated the costs of economic decline when self-inflicted housing and planning mistakes over decades led to neighbourhood breakdown.¹¹⁸ These failings included population dispersal, clearance blight, mass housing schemes, housing allocation policy,

¹¹² Yelling, ‘Slum Clearance’, 242; Rodgers, ‘Metropolitan Planning’, 53.

¹¹³ Rodgers, ‘Metropolitan Planning’, 53.

¹¹⁴ Report of the North-West Study Group 1965: Brendan Nevin, Peter Lee *et al.*, ‘Changing Housing Markets and Urban Regeneration: The case of the M62 Corridor (abridged version)’, [academic study], *Manchester/Liverpool II*, Berlin: Philipp Oswald, 2004, 20-1.

¹¹⁵ Rodgers, ‘Metropolitan Planning’, 53; Robson, ‘County Housing Market’, 104; Millward, ‘Housing Renewal’, 89; G. A. McWilliam, ‘Planning the City of the Future: II. Salford’, in Charles Carter (ed.), *Manchester and its Region* (Manchester: British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1962), 264.

¹¹⁶ Brendan Nevin, ‘The Drivers of Change in the Manchester-Salford Housing Market: A review of the evidence and policy implications’, [consultancy report], Birmingham: ECORYS UK, 2005, 4.

¹¹⁷ Nevin, ‘Drivers of Change’, 4. On the Hulme Crescents see Lynsey Hanley, *Estates—An Intimate History* (London: Granta, 2007), 129-132.

¹¹⁸ Michael Parkinson, ‘Leadership and Regeneration in Liverpool: Confusion, confrontation or coalition?’, in Dennis Judd and Michael Parkinson (eds.), *Leadership and Urban Regeneration: Cities in North America and Europe* (London: SAGE, 1990), 241; Brendan Nevin, ‘Housing Market Renewal in Liverpool: Locating the gentrification debate in history, context and evidence’, *Housing Studies*, 25/5 (2010), 715–33, 717-8; Oliver Sykes, Jonathan Brown *et al.*, ‘Profile of Liverpool’, *Cities: The International Journal of Urban Policy and Planning*, 35 (2013), 299–318, 10.

political instability and an inability to manage place through mainstream investment.¹¹⁹ The equivalent postwar management of Smethwick should be judged against such cases.

Figure 2.4: 'Fort Ardwick'—Coverdale Crescent Flats, Manchester, 1980s



Source: 'Fort Ardwick'—Coverdale Crescent Flats, Manchester, 1980s', from <http://manchesterhistory.net/manchester/gone/Fortardwick.html>. © David Boardman. Reproduced with permission of *A Manchester View*: David Boardman, 12 February 2016.

¹¹⁹ See Special Note 2: Governance and Decline in Liverpool.

Figure 2.5: Hulme Crescents, Manchester, 1979



Source: 'Hulme Crescents, Manchester, 1979', from <http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=1600557>. © Alan Denny. Reproduced with permission of Alan Denney, 15 February 2016.

The scale of postwar inner-city clearance and estate-building proved a negative driver within the wider context of urban change and decline.¹²⁰ Councils unexpectedly came to dominate cities through large, monolithic, single-tenure, single-class estates built in a short timescale.¹²¹ Some exhibited early physical, management, financial and social problems.¹²² Dunleavy stressed the physical product within the factors subsequently affecting 'mass housing'.¹²³ Problems included faulty design and construction methods, materials failure, inadequate fire-stopping, dampness and expensive heating.¹²⁴ Estate

¹²⁰ Power and Mumford, 'Slow Death of Great Cities', 67.

¹²¹ Power, *'Estates on the Edge'*, 39; Power and Mumford, 'Slow Death of Great Cities', 68-9; Power and Houghton, *'Jigsaw Cities'*, 5.

¹²² Power, *'Estates on the Edge'*, 49, 65, 75; Power and Mumford, 'Slow Death of Great Cities', 69.

¹²³ Dunleavy, *'Politics of Mass Housing'*, 47.

¹²⁴ Ravetz, *'Council Housing and Culture'*, 105; Power, *'Estates on the Edge'*, 59; Power and Houghton, *'Jigsaw Cities'*, 68; Cole and Furbey, *'Eclipse of Council Housing'*, 104.

designs most prone to failure were 'Radburn' houses and medium-rise 'deck-access' blocks and their use in Smethwick is discussed in Chapter 5.¹²⁵ Power identified the social aspect of enforced communality: high-density living with dilution of ground-level social contact led to conflict over supervision, damage and nuisance in a difficult-to-police environment.¹²⁶ This invoked the notion of 'problem tenants' and for Power, the linkage between 'management failure, poor design and social disintegration'.¹²⁷ Disruptive tenants were few (perhaps three per cent) but their impact, particularly in flatted estates, was disproportionate.¹²⁸

National policy, investment restrictions, physical legacies and wider socio-economic drivers affected council housing, but local management was also critical. Clapham noted 'good practice' studies assumed the 'all-powerful nature of housing management'.¹²⁹ Yet the literature identified lack of management expertise in running publicly-owned estates.¹³⁰ Little thought was given in the period of expansion to how council housing and municipal-created neighbourhoods might be managed.¹³¹ Housing management grew *ad-hoc*, with little professional training, and in one analysis, 'afflicted by a deep-rooted torpor'.¹³² Centralised, expensive, inefficient and unresponsive repairs services were typical.¹³³ Despite moves to corporate management from the 1970s, existing council departments regarded aspects of housing management as their own preserve, so that newly-created housing

¹²⁵ Ravetz, 'Council Housing and Culture', 102-3, 188; Power and Houghton, 'Jigsaw Cities', 69.

¹²⁶ Power, 'Estates on the Edge', 55, 94, 299.

¹²⁷ Power, 'Estates on the Edge', 109.

¹²⁸ Ravetz, 'Council Housing and Culture', 211. The three per cent figure was derived from a study of 20 estates: Anne Power, *Property Before People: The management of twentieth-century council housing* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 223.

¹²⁹ David Clapham, 'The Social Construction of Housing Management Research', *Urban Studies*, 34/5-6 (1997), 761-74, 766.

¹³⁰ Power, 'Estates on the Edge', 105; Power, 'Property Before People', 88-90; Power and Mumford, 'Slow Death of Great Cities', 69; Ravetz, 'Council Housing and Culture', 237.

¹³¹ Ravetz, 'Council Housing and Culture', 111; Power, 'Property Before People', 66.

¹³² Ravetz, 'Council Housing and Culture', 112; Cole and Furbey, 'Eclipse of Council Housing', 78, 136; quote 147.

¹³³ Power, 'Property Before People', 90.

departments were commonly left with lettings and rent collection functions.¹³⁴ They were hampered by councillor involvement in lettings and detailed operational management.¹³⁵

Council housing was described by Ginsburg as a 'form of public landlordism rather than a more benevolent welfare service'.¹³⁶ Cole and Furbey accordingly described it as 'a service of uneven, sometimes poor and oppressive, quality in which the conflicting demands of social justice, political democracy, user empowerment and managerial efficiency remained unresolved'.¹³⁷ Tenants tended to be regarded as numbers, 'applicants' and 'cases'.¹³⁸ Most tenants' groups had 'a fairly precarious existence' and there was a lack of legally-enforceable tenancy rights until the 1980 Tenants' Charter.¹³⁹ Only from the late 1970s did many local authorities change their management practices to adopt resident involvement in council housing.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁴ On corporate management see Collinge, 'Political Power and Corporate Managerialism', 351. On the subordinate position of housing department see Ravetz, '*Council Housing and Culture*', 112; Cole and Furbey, '*Eclipse of Council Housing*', 133.

¹³⁵ Cole and Furbey, '*Eclipse of Council Housing*', 122-4.

¹³⁶ N. Ginsburg, *Class, Capital and Social Policy* (London: Macmillan, 1979), 139; cited in Cole and Furbey, '*Eclipse of Council Housing*', 118.

¹³⁷ Cole and Furbey, '*Eclipse of Council Housing*', 147. To give a Smethwick example, in a rare relaxation of a uniform approach to estate appearance, the housing committee in June 1955 decided that while municipal decoration schemes should solely feature cream-painted woodwork, 'doors in a varying colour' would be permitted: Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', [council report], Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, [1920-66], Minute 13999: 'Colour scheme', meeting held on 13 June 1955. But Minute 13999 was rescinded at the next meeting, when it was resolved that 'doors be painted in one colour, except in blocks of six or more houses where a different colour may be used': Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', Minute 14063: 'Colour scheme', meeting held on 11 July 1955.

¹³⁸ Baston, 'Labour Local Government', 464.

¹³⁹ Cole and Furbey, '*Eclipse of Council Housing*', 139; quotation from Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 'Tenant Participation in Council Housing', [academic study], *Findings*, York: JRF, 1990, 3; in Ravetz, '*Council Housing and Culture*', 211.

¹⁴⁰ Ravetz, '*Council Housing and Culture*', 211.

Ravetz argued the management function that made the biggest single contribution to the evolution of council housing was ‘allocations’: the selection and placing of tenants.¹⁴¹ There was an inherent tension or moral balancing act between merit (‘deservingness’) and need; the landlord function (placing ‘best into best’) and a social services role.¹⁴² House visits and subjective ‘grading’ judgments and ‘steering’ were the norm.¹⁴³ People in slum clearance areas were ill-equipped to resist rehousing offers in flatted estates.¹⁴⁴ Such lettings practices gave rise to the apparent ‘dumping’ into low-demand estates in the 1970s of the least-desired, or most desperate, tenants.¹⁴⁵ For difficult-to-let stock could ‘result in the acceptance of more vulnerable households in order to avoid vacancies’.¹⁴⁶ Housing departments were exposed to rising turnover, short-term use of the sector and a poorer tenancy profile as lettings were recast to meet new legal homeless responsibilities after 1977.¹⁴⁷

A 1981 DoE study found some estates ‘presented problems from the time they were opened’.¹⁴⁸ Broadwater Farm was built in 1967–70 and difficult-to-let by 1973.¹⁴⁹ As Ravetz put it, just as poverty deepened through deindustrialisation, the issue then arose of ‘how to

¹⁴¹ Ravetz, *'Council Housing and Culture'*, 129, 131.

¹⁴² Ravetz, *'Council Housing and Culture'*, 130, 132; Carter, *'From Slums to Slums'*, 20.

¹⁴³ Ravetz, *'Council Housing and Culture'*, 133; Power, *'Estates on the Edge'*, 290.

¹⁴⁴ Dunleavy, *'Politics of Mass Housing'*, 31; Clapham, *'Housing Management Research'*, 765.

¹⁴⁵ Power, *'Property Before People'*, 152; Ravetz, *'Council Housing and Culture'*, 200; Ruth Lupton, *'Poverty Street—The dynamics of neighbourhood decline and renewal'*, [academic study], Bristol: Policy Press, 2003, 206.

¹⁴⁶ Ellen van Beckhoven, Gideon Bolt, and Ronald van Kempen, *'Theories of Neighbourhood Change and Neighbourhood Decline: Their significance for post-World War 2 large housing estates'*, [academic paper], *ENHR-conference, Reykjavik, 29 June–2 July 2005: 'Housing in Europe: New challenges and innovations in tomorrow's cities'*, 2005, 17.

¹⁴⁷ Ravetz, *'Council Housing and Culture'*, 199–200, 203, 213.

¹⁴⁸ M. Burbidge, S. Wilson *et al.*, *'Case Studies of Postwar Estates'*, [academic study], London: Department of the Environment, 1981, 2 cited in Ravetz, *'Council Housing and Culture'*, 185.

¹⁴⁹ Ravetz, *'Council Housing and Culture'*, 186. Also see Hanley, *'Estates'*, 125–129.

deal with environments created to eliminate poverty'.¹⁵⁰ Previously 'rough' areas targeted for slum clearance became, in their replacement guise, 'difficult-to-let', 'difficult-to-manage', 'problem' and 'sink' estates in a sharpened neighbourhood hierarchy.¹⁵¹ Economic and housing market change 'residualised' areas that were already poor.¹⁵² Byrne noted how the specific history of Meadowell in South Shields exposed it to 'profound changes in socio-spatial structure'. It 'became the worst element in the housing stock of a large metropolitan district'. But he also argued that 'if Meadowell had not existed, somewhere else would have fulfilled the same function'.¹⁵³

To conclude this section, the scale and pace of their restructuring of central urban areas left local authorities in a dominant role: acquiring land and decanting and sorting populations into mass housing schemes requiring intensive investment and management. This left them uniquely responsible for 'place'—and the mounting problems. Liverpool is an example where interlocking economic decline and flawed housing and planning policy were sufficiently grave at city-level to cause multi-tenure neighbourhood collapse. Particular estates such as Meadowell, Hulme, Castle Vale, and Broadwater Farm exhibited physical and social problems comparable to Windmill Lane in Smethwick. The history of Windmill Lane and the wider weaknesses of local authority housing management and strategic planning affecting Smethwick discussed in later chapters, should be interpreted within this local government context.

¹⁵⁰ Ravetz, *'Council Housing and Culture'*, 193.

¹⁵¹ Steve Eling, 'Interviews with Author', 18 July and 11 September 2013.

¹⁵² Peter Hall, 'Regeneration Policies for Peripheral Housing Estates: Inward and outward-looking approaches', *Urban Studies*, 34/5–6 (1997), 873–90, 876; Keith Kintrea, 'Policies and Programmes for Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods: Recent English experience', *Housing Studies*, 22/2 (2007), 261–82, 262; Lupton, 'Poverty Street', 206.

¹⁵³ David Byrne, 'Book reviews. Meadowell: The Biography of an "Estate with Problems"', M. Barke and G. Turnbull. Aldershot: Avebury, 1992', *Housing Studies*, 8/1 (1993), 70–1.

2.3 Structural forces and Problem Places: Urban policy from area-based regeneration to economic competitiveness

This final section discusses the chequered history of explicit national urban policy as expressed in various area-based regeneration initiatives before ending in 2010/11. It was introduced as a response to urban decline, principally triggered by issues such as deindustrialisation and the failure of system-built housing. Regeneration nevertheless encompasses sharply divergent analyses of the role of the state and 'what works' in practice; including whether effort should be neighbourhood-based or relate to natural economic areas; and how this equates to 'place'. This section also discusses local partnerships and community engagement as a critical dimension; and the implications for local authorities in managing places.

There is no universal definition or 'story' of urban policy, although clearly it relates spatially to places and urban processes, and to urban populations themselves.¹⁵⁴ Slum clearance and redevelopment is an example of urban policy before the term came into general use after 1968. Harding *et al* distinguished between 'explicit urban policy' (or regeneration) and 'implicit urban policy': the wide range of public policies, investments and forms of regulation affecting cities in ways usually incidental to how decisions are made.¹⁵⁵ Debate around (poor) urban populations is philosophically and politically framed.¹⁵⁶ 'The city, for at least two centuries' observed Rose, 'has been both a problem for government

¹⁵⁴ Cochrane, 'Understanding Urban Policy', 2-3, 14.

¹⁵⁵ Harding, Nevin *et al.*, 'Cities and Public Policy', 17.

¹⁵⁶ Alun Severn, 'Interview with Author', 29 January 2013. Severn was a social enterprise consultant who grew up in Marshall Street, Smethwick.

and a permanent incitement to government'.¹⁵⁷ Thus in one view: 'urban policy is not – in the main – about urban areas *per se*; it is about urban areas in trouble'.¹⁵⁸ For Southern, 'regeneration implies problems to be solved and simultaneously insinuates malevolent notions of causation'.¹⁵⁹ Divergent analyses of decline underline why Atkinson and Moon called urban policy a 'chaotic conception'.¹⁶⁰

Disentangling causes of urban problems from their nature or description is a complex, yet crucial task.¹⁶¹ Explanation divides on the importance given to place and consequently to wider structural or more local neighbourhood factors.¹⁶² This tension is implied in the definition provided by a parliamentary select committee: 'Regeneration is a long-term, comprehensive process which aims to tackle social, economic, physical and environmental issues in places where the market has failed'.¹⁶³ Critically, regeneration additionally aims to address these issues through partnership working that involves the community and local stakeholders.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁷ N. Rose, 'Governing Cities, Governing Citizens', in E. Isin (ed.), *Democracy, Citizenship and the Global City* (London: Routledge, 2000), 95; quoted in Imrie, 'Governing the Cities', 132.

¹⁵⁸ Tim Leunig and James Swaffield, 'Cities Limited', [opinion piece], London: Policy Exchange, 2007, 13.

¹⁵⁹ Alan Southern, '"Regeneration" in a time of austerity will mean the death of this metaphor, but what will come next?', *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, 6/4 (2013), 399–405, 400.

¹⁶⁰ Atkinson and Moon, *'Urban Policy in Britain'*, 20.

¹⁶¹ Hall, 'Peripheral Housing Estates', 875; Peter Gripaios, 'The Failure of Regeneration Policy in Britain', *Regional Studies*, 36/5 (2002), 568–77, 569; Atkinson and Moon, *'Urban Policy in Britain'*, 17; Victor Hausner, 'The Future of Urban Development', *Royal Society of Arts Journal*, 141/5441 (1993), 523–33, 526.

¹⁶² Ruth Lupton and Anne Power, 'What we know about Neighbourhood Change: A literature review', [academic study], *CASE Report 27*, London: London School of Economics and Political Science, Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, 2004, 4; Paul Chatterton and David Bradley, 'Bringing Britain Together? The limitations of area-based regeneration policies in addressing deprivation', *Local Economy*, 15/2 (2000), 98–111, 98; Annette Hastings, 'Stigma and Social Housing Estates: Beyond pathological explanations', *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 19/3 (2004), 233–54, 235.

¹⁶³ UK Parliament, 'Regeneration: Sixth Report of Session 2010–12 HC 1014', [parliamentary report], *House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee*, London: The Stationery Office, 2011, 3.

¹⁶⁴ Tallon, *'Urban Regeneration'*, 5; Peter Roberts, 'The Evolution, Definition and Purpose of Urban Regeneration', in Peter Roberts and Hugh Sykes (eds.), *Urban Regeneration—A Handbook* (London: SAGE, 2000), 17.

Structural accounts locate drivers of poverty and neighbourhood change in wider (external) socio-economic change.¹⁶⁵ For Chatterton and Bradley, 'deprived communities do not suffer because of their disconnection, but because of their connection': their vulnerability to mobile capital flows and the filtering effect of many market and institutional processes.¹⁶⁶ Structural change such as deindustrialisation and immigration interact with national fiscal, employment, housing and other national policies and programmes to affect neighbourhood outcomes.¹⁶⁷ Public policy can intensify, or reduce, socio-spatial disadvantage.¹⁶⁸ Harding *et al* argued significant urban disparities resulting from post-industrial shifts appear to have been accelerated by implicit urban policy favouring the London 'super-region'.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Hastings, 'Stigma and Social Housing', 236; Rowland Atkinson and Keith Kintrea, 'Disentangling Area Effects: Evidence from deprived and non-deprived neighbourhoods', *Urban Studies*, 38/12 (2001), 2277–98, 2279; Hall, 'Peripheral Housing Estates', 876; George Galster, 'On the Nature of Neighbourhood', *Urban Studies*, 38/12 (2001), 2111–24, 2118. Also see Peter Townsend, *Poverty in the UK* (London: Penguin, 1979), 564.

¹⁶⁶ Chatterton and Bradley, 'Bringing Britain Together?', 105. Also see Nick Oatley, 'New Labour's Approach to Age-Old Problems: Renewing and revitalising poor neighbourhoods—the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal', *Local Economy*, 15/2 (2000), 86–97, 90; Hall, 'Peripheral Housing Estates', 876; Peter Somerville, Ellen Van Beckhoven, and Ronald Van Kempen, 'The Decline and Rise of Neighbourhoods: The importance of neighbourhood governance', *International Journal of Housing Policy*, 9/1 (2009), 1–36, 13.

¹⁶⁷ Lupton and Power, 'Neighbourhood Change', 33; Hall, 'Peripheral Housing Estates', 876. A DoE review of urban problems found: 'Spatially concentrated unemployment, disadvantage, poverty and deprivation result from the combined effects of the housing and labour markets and factors generating poverty and low income. Housing market processes tend to concentrate those with least resources in the cheapest and frequently worst quality housing. Given the geographical structure of the housing stock, this leads to the spatial concentration of different disadvantaged groups. The process is exacerbated by the economic vulnerability of such areas to economic restructuring and job loss': Department of the Environment, 'Socio-Demographic Change and the Inner City', [government report], London: HMSO, 1995, 98; cited in Shaw and Robinson, 'Learning from Experience', 53.

¹⁶⁸ Hastings, 'Stigma and Social Housing', 236; Annette Hastings, 'Neighbourhood Environmental Services and Neighbourhood "Effects"—Exploring the role of urban services in intensifying neighbourhood problems', *Housing Studies*, 24/4 (2009), 503–24, 509; Kevin Broughton, Nigel Berkeley, and David Jarvis, 'Where Next for Neighbourhood Regeneration in England?', *Local Economy*, 26/2 (2011), 82–94, 83.

¹⁶⁹ Harding, Nevin *et al.*, 'Cities and Public Policy', 27.

Neighbourhood-level analysis can be linked to an ‘enduring pathological discourse’ about a spatial concentration of a poor ‘underclass’ marked by behavioural distance from mainstream norms.¹⁷⁰ Here poverty is related to a ‘dependency culture’ arising from supposedly unsustainable welfare provision.¹⁷¹ A later report by the conservative Centre for Social Justice identified ‘five pathways to poverty’ where ‘family breakdown, educational failure, economic dependence, indebtedness and addiction are all interrelated’ (the report devoted a chapter to each of these).¹⁷² However, neighbourhood explanations also include the extent of education and skills; social capital, including local collective action; public investment; effectiveness of local services; and governance and political arrangements.¹⁷³ Figure 2.6 shows a ‘cycle of decline’ from New Labour’s national neighbourhood strategy. Writers also refer to ‘intrinsic’ or ‘hard-to-change’ characteristics of areas: location and proximity to growth areas; modernist design failings and related housing management costs; and neighbourhood or estate stigma.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰ Imrie, ‘Governing the Cities’, 132; Keith Shaw and Fred Robinson, ‘Centenary Paper—UK Urban Regeneration Policies in the early twenty-first century: Continuity or change?’, *The Town Planning Review*, 81/2 (2010), 123–49, 136. Also see Charles Murray, *The Emerging British Underclass* (London: Institute of Economic Affairs, 1990).

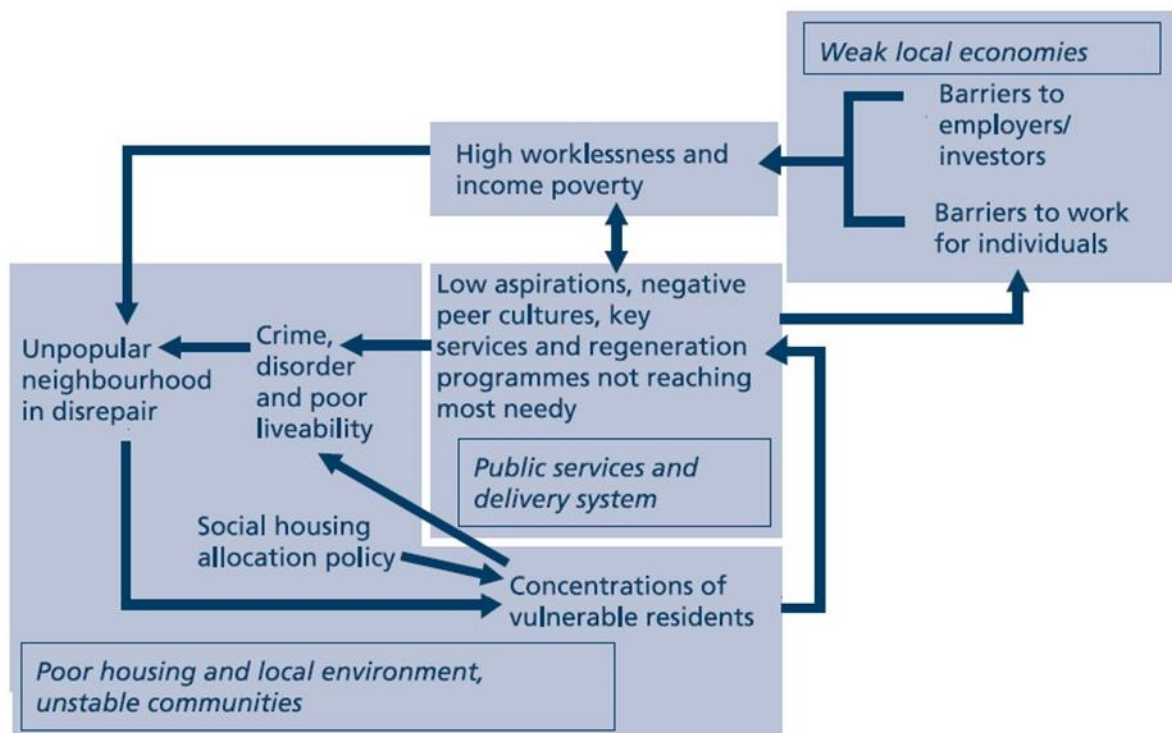
¹⁷¹ Hastings, ‘Stigma and Social Housing’, 237; Chatterton and Bradley, ‘Bringing Britain Together?’, 100.

¹⁷² Centre for Social Justice, ‘Breakdown Britain: Interim report on the state of the nation’, [opinion piece], London: Centre for Social Justice, 2006, 15. Also see Centre for Social Justice, ‘Signed On, Written Off: An inquiry into welfare dependency in Britain’, [opinion piece], London: Centre for Social Justice, 2013.

¹⁷³ Lupton and Power, ‘Neighbourhood Change’, 18; Michelle Norris and Cathal O’Connell, ‘Decline and Renewal of Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods: Old insights, new evidence and policy implications’, *Planning Practice & Research*, 29/4 (2014), 370–87, 371.

¹⁷⁴ Lupton, ‘Poverty Street’, 97, 205; Hall, ‘Peripheral Housing Estates’, 875.

Figure 2.6: 'Overview of the drivers of the cycle of decline that affects deprived areas'



Source: 'Overview of the drivers of the cycle of decline that affects deprived areas', from Prime Minister's Strategy Unit and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, *Improving the Prospects of People living in Areas of Multiple Deprivation in England*, 2005, 12. © The Stationery Office. Reproduced under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0.

The additional burden of a local stigma or even nationally problematic reputation is an aspect of what Wacquant termed 'advanced marginality'.¹⁷⁵ Parker and Karner discussed 'reputational geographies' in areas portrayed as segregated Muslim enclaves.¹⁷⁶ Yet Cole and Smith described stigma as an 'elusive process'.¹⁷⁷ Hastings isolated more than twenty distinctive actors affecting reputation, including a range of public and private sector

¹⁷⁵ Loic Wacquant, 'Urban Marginality in the Coming Millennium', *Urban Studies*, 36/10 (1999), 1639–47, 1640. Also see John Baldwin, 'Urban Criminality and the "Problem" Estate', *Local Government Studies*, 1/4 (1975), 12–20; Erin K. Sharpe, 'Targeted Neighbourhood Social Policy: A critical analysis', *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*, 5/2 (2013), 158–71, 166–7; Ade Kearns and Michael Parkinson, 'The Significance of Neighbourhood', *Urban Studies*, 38/12 (2001), 2103–10, 2105.

¹⁷⁶ David Parker and Christian Karner, 'Remembering the Alum Rock Road: Reputational geographies and spatial biographies', *Midland History*, 36/2 (2011), 292–309, <<http://www.maneyonline.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1179/004772911X13074595849275>>, accessed 15 December 2014, 295.

¹⁷⁷ Ian Cole and Yvonne Smith, 'From Estate Action to Estate Agreement: Regeneration and change on the Bell Farm estate, York', [academic study], Bristol: Policy Press, 1996, 30.

agencies, local employers and media.¹⁷⁸ Atkinson and Kintrea suggested a perception that services are dealing with 'problem people' in 'problem areas' could lead to the 'reinforcement of low standards' and reduced 'effectiveness in winning quality local services'.¹⁷⁹ Later reviews of street services by Hastings found continued patterns of 'territorial injustice'.¹⁸⁰ But Lupton argued extreme concentrations of poverty 'made them almost impossible to manage with the normal structures and resources of public services'.¹⁸¹ Her case studies found frontline services in the 1990s experienced cuts, repeated reorganisations and the distorting effect of performance targets. It led to recruitment difficulties, low morale, high sickness and cynicism and mistrust by residents.¹⁸²

Issues such as stigma and service disparity thereby reflect the structural origins of neighbourhood decline, but also 'the importance of place'.¹⁸³ An urban White Paper argued: 'How we live our lives is shaped by where we live our lives'.¹⁸⁴ Somerville *et al* raised the question of how structural forces are actually played out within each neighbourhood and the local interpretation and response to those forces.¹⁸⁵ In some places, the governance imperative was the management of decline. This suggests the value of examining neighbourhoods as related elements within urban and regional systems, focusing on operation of more-localised processes of change embedded in particular contexts and the

¹⁷⁸ Hastings, 'Stigma and Social Housing', 249.

¹⁷⁹ Atkinson and Kintrea, 'Disentangling Area Effects', 2281.

¹⁸⁰ Hastings, 'Neighbourhood Environmental Services', 505.

¹⁸¹ Lupton, 'Poverty Street', 208. Also see Nick Buck, 'Identifying Neighbourhood Effects on Social Exclusion', *Urban Studies*, 38/12 (2001), 2251–75, 2225.

¹⁸² Lupton, 'Poverty Street', 109, 208.

¹⁸³ Lupton, 'Poverty Street', 205. Also see Atkinson and Kintrea, 'Disentangling Area Effects', 2295.

¹⁸⁴ Department for Environment Transport and the Regions, 'Our Towns and Cities: The Future. Delivering an Urban Renaissance', [government report], London: DETR, 2000; quoted in Cochrane, 'Understanding Urban Policy', 1.

¹⁸⁵ Somerville, Van Beckhoven *et al.*, 'Decline and Rise of Neighbourhoods', 15. Also see Kintrea, 'Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods', 264.

relationships between them; all within a broader structural context.¹⁸⁶ There can be critical moments in neighbourhood trajectories, so a temporal view may illuminate broader causes and consequences of change.¹⁸⁷ For example, deindustrialisation— indisputably important in the 1970s/80s—may now be less significant than, say, asylum-seeker inflow reversing population decline, but ‘topping-up’ poverty.¹⁸⁸ This is the approach taken to understand Smethwick.

The Audit Commission branded regeneration practice a ‘patchwork quilt of complexity and idiosyncrasy’.¹⁸⁹ A government minister later described urban policy as a ‘bowl of spaghetti’.¹⁹⁰ It could be dismissed as ‘experimental’, ‘symbolic’ or an exercise in ‘crisis-management’.¹⁹¹ It should more fairly be seen as the product of contested rationales and policy uncertainty inherent in an approach with multiple objectives and activities cutting across government departments, centrally and locally. In a review of urban policy, Harding *et al* characterised ‘principal axes of variation’ between whether programmes were: focussed on ‘economic development’ (competitiveness) or ‘regeneration’ (physical,

¹⁸⁶ Lupton and Power, 'Neighbourhood Change', 4; Stephen Syrett and David North, 'Between Economic Competitiveness and Social Inclusion: New Labour and the economic revival of deprived neighbourhoods', *Local Economy*, 25/5–6 (2010), 476–93, 477–8.

¹⁸⁷ Lupton, 'Poverty Street', 17; Lee Pugalís and Joyce Liddle, 'Austerity Era Regeneration: Conceptual issues and practical challenges, Part 1', *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, 6/4 (2013), 333–8, 333.

¹⁸⁸ Lupton, 'Poverty Street', 28, 178, 215.

¹⁸⁹ Audit Commission, 'Urban Regeneration and Economic Development: The local government dimension', [government report], London: HMSO, 1989, 1. This prompted Hambleton to observe: 'It is the most curious of patchwork quilts in which the various pieces are not actually sewn together': Robin Hambleton, 'Issues for Urban Policy in the 1990s', *Town Planning Review*, 64/3 (1993), 313–23, 317; quoted in Fred Robinson and Keith Shaw, 'Urban Policy under the Conservatives—In Search of the Big Idea?', *Local Economy*, 9/3 (1994), 224–35, 225.

¹⁹⁰ 'Maze of initiatives "like spaghetti"', *Guardian*, 14 January 2003. Also see Johnstone and Whitehead, 'British Urban Policy', 5; Shaw and Robinson, 'Continuity or Change?', 127.

¹⁹¹ Stuart Wilks-Heeg, 'Urban experiments limited revisited: Urban policy comes full circle?', *Urban Studies*, 33/8 (1996), 1263–79, 1264; Stewart, 'Inner Cities Policy', 129; R. Atkinson, 'Urban Crisis: New policies for the next century', in P. Allmendinger and M. Chapman (eds.), *Planning Beyond 2000* (Chichester: Wiley, 1999), 84; quoted in Barry Cullingworth and Vincent Nadin, *Town and Country Planning in the UK* (13th edn.; London: Routledge, 2002), 290; Martin Jones and Kevin Ward, 'Excavating the Logic of British Urban Policy: Neoliberalism as the "crisis of crisis-management"', *Antipode*, 34/3 (2002), 473–94.

including housing, environment or social improvements); targeted on 'places' or 'people'; aimed at 'neighbourhoods' or 'cities' (or wider economic areas); implemented through specially-created delivery vehicles or partnerships of existing institutions; and designed to coordinate existing mainstream activity or constitute an additional, short-term or pilot intervention.¹⁹² To these should be added the scale and duration of government funding and whether allocated to need (eligibility) or secured through competitive bidding; and most fundamentally, the centrality or otherwise of the local authority, being at one extreme, a body or initiative imposed by national government. In the terminology of impact evaluation, Smethwick was 'policy on' throughout the 1968 to 2010 period and experienced all these urban policy variants.¹⁹³

Despite these variations, a feature since 1979 is a neoliberal critique of the problem to be addressed, where economic crises, particularly those of 1974–5 and 2007–8 were decisive (punctuated-equilibrium).¹⁹⁴ Area-based initiatives (ABIs) formed a key pillar of urban policy over 40 years.¹⁹⁵ Kintrea nevertheless argued: 'All these shared an assumption that problems were inherent to the locality; yet with temporary special treatment could be returned to a non-problematic condition. As such, there was no conceptual link between

¹⁹² Harding, Nevin *et al.*, 'Cities and Public Policy', 8-9.

¹⁹³ 'Policy-on' is contrasted with a 'policy off' environment in the absence of a particular programme or initiative to establish its additionality or net benefit. Also see Peter Tyler, Colin Warnock *et al.*, 'Valuing the Benefits of Urban Regeneration', *Urban Studies*, 50/1 (2013), 169–90: 173.

¹⁹⁴ Jones and Ward, 'Urban Policy', 473; Johnstone and Whitehead, 'British Urban Policy', 8-9; Imrie, 'Governing the Cities', 136; Syrett and North, 'New Labour and Deprived Neighbourhoods', 478; Shaw and Robinson, 'Continuity or Change?', 141; Sharpe, 'Neighbourhood Social Policy', 168. Also see Stuart Hall, 'The Great Moving Right Show', in Stuart Hall and Martin Jacques (eds.), *The Politics of Thatcherism* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1983). The argument about economic breakpoints was made by Harding, Nevin *et al.*, 'Cities and Public Policy', 2.

¹⁹⁵ Paul Lawless, 'Urban Regeneration: Is there a future?', *People, Place & Policy*, 4/1 (2010), 24–8, <<http://extra.shu.ac.uk/ppp-online/urban-regeneration-is-there-a-future/>>, accessed 14 November 2015, 24; Shaw and Robinson, 'Continuity or Change?', 125; Peter Matthews, 'From Area-Based Initiatives to Strategic Partnerships: Have we lost the meaning of regeneration?', *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 30/1 (2012), 147–61, 148.

neighbourhoods and wider systems and policies'.¹⁹⁶ Hence the structural nature of poverty related to inequality 'falls into the category of "inconvenient knowledge", best ignored'.¹⁹⁷

Yet neighbourhood-based policy as expressed through ABIs was also founded on recognition that 'place matters'.¹⁹⁸ This was described as 'territorial crisis-management', hence the New Labour early focus on the 'worst estates'.¹⁹⁹ But as Sharpe suggested, it also provided a manageable and appealing area of focus.²⁰⁰ It offered the potential for bending mainstream services to address the 'wicked issue' of neighbourhood problems; and in particular as a route for community engagement and democratic challenge.²⁰¹ A consistent feature of the author's experience in working on dozens of ABI funding bids was the local view of it as an opportunity. The chance to convey lived experience and necessary change was welcomed by communities and frequently led to sustained involvement in local partnerships.

¹⁹⁶ Kintrea, 'Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods', 267. Also see Townsend, *Poverty in the UK*, 560; Cochrane, *Understanding Urban Policy*, 3; Chatterton and Bradley, 'Bringing Britain Together?', 100; Johnstone and Whitehead, 'British Urban Policy', 17; Imrie, 'Governing the Cities', 137.

¹⁹⁷ R. A. W. Rhodes, 'New Labour's Civil Service: Summing-up joining up', *Political Quarterly*, 71/2 (2000), 151–66, 165 footnote 7; quoted in Oatley, 'Age-Old Problems', 93. Also see Annette Hastings, 'Strategic, Multi-level Neighbourhood Regeneration: An outward-looking approach at last?', in Rob Imrie and Mike Raco (eds.), *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, community and urban policy* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2003), 234.

¹⁹⁸ Sharpe, 'Neighbourhood Social Policy', 161.

¹⁹⁹ Tallon, *Urban Regeneration*, 62; Atkinson and Kintrea, 'Disentangling Area Effects', 2277.

²⁰⁰ Sharpe, 'Neighbourhood Social Policy', 168.

²⁰¹ Sharpe, 'Neighbourhood Social Policy', 161; Catherine Durose and James Rees, 'The Rise and Fall of Neighbourhood in the New Labour era', *Policy & Politics*, 40/1 (2012), 39–55, 42. Originally advanced by Rittel and Webber, 'wicked issues' in this context have four elements: they are elusive, in that they have no definite formulation, and continually evolve and mutate; they are essentially subjective, since potential solutions are not true or false but are seen as good or bad, depending on ones' values and interests; they are unique and context specific; and finally they are complex, in that every wicked problem can be seen as a symptom of other problems: Cole, 'Housing Market Renewal', 354.

Almost all regeneration initiatives become predicated on partnerships, and Carley found 75 operating in a single city (Manchester) at sub-regional, city-wide and neighbourhood levels.²⁰² Some of this was illusory, to secure grant funding or because of inherent tensions, often around the role of the local authority.²⁰³ Based on the successes and failures of running a major Wolverhampton ABI, Khamis suggested the partnership success features needed to build meaningful community participation. Partnership was respectively about 'power', 'trust', 'ownership', 'communication', 'recognising diversity', 'taking responsibility', 'making things happen' and a 'process which needs leadership and management'.²⁰⁴ Partnerships could be efficient and effective, but critically, they constituted a democratic right for local people.²⁰⁵ A later study found City Challenge to be Wolverhampton's most successful ABI because of its partnership approach.²⁰⁶

The interval from 'patchwork quilt' (1989) to 'bowl of spaghetti' (2002) saw a rise from 17 to 46 identified regeneration initiatives, prompting a government review.²⁰⁷ But studies found 150 separate programmes relevant to urban policy across a range of

²⁰² Michael Carley, 'Urban Partnerships, Governance and the Regeneration of Britain's Cities', *International Planning Studies*, 5/3 (2000), 273–97, 273.

²⁰³ Shaw and Robinson, 'Learning from Experience', 58. Also see Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, 'Too Many Partners . . . The Future for Regeneration Partnerships', *Local Economy*, 9/3 (1994), 251–65; Allan Cochrane, Jamie Peck, and Adam Tickell, 'Manchester Plays Games: Exploring the local politics of globalisation', *Urban Studies*, 33/8 (1996), 1319–36; Mark Whitehead, '"In the Shadow of Hierarchy": Meta-governance, policy reform and urban regeneration in the West Midlands', *Area*, 35/1 (2003), 6–14.

²⁰⁴ Chris Khamis, 'The Wolverhampton City Challenge experience of building partnerships with the local community', [conference paper], *BURA Conference: 'The Single Regeneration Budget: Progressing the Partnerships'*, 15–16 May 1995, 1995, 4–7. Khamis was also a fellow director of CSR Partnership with the author who particularly worked with the Smethwick Regeneration Partnership.

²⁰⁵ Khamis, 'Building Partnerships', 4–7.

²⁰⁶ Steven Henderson, 'An Evaluation of the Layering and Legacy of Area-based Regeneration Initiatives in England—the Case of Wolverhampton', *Urban Studies*, 49/6 (2012), 1201–27, 1214, 1216, 1221–3. Also see Hilary Russell, Jon Dawson *et al.*, 'City Challenge Interim National Evaluation', [academic study], *Department of the Environment*, London: The Stationery Office, 1996, 87, 90, 97, 103.

²⁰⁷ Regional Coordination Unit: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 'Review of Area-based initiatives', [government report], London: ODPM, 2002.

government departments.²⁰⁸ It was apparent by 1998 that ‘Disparate urban initiatives have been developed in a random and *ad-hoc* manner, with little recourse to strategic or longer-term thinking—what the Audit Commission called “programme overkill in a strategic vacuum”’.²⁰⁹ Lupton found one neighbourhood targeted by seven ABIs, but other deprived places bypassed.²¹⁰ New Labour ‘reinforced this complexity by developing additional spatial scales of operation at the regional, sub-regional and neighbourhood levels and creating an environment in which constant change in institutions, policies and governance arrangements was the norm’.²¹¹ With it went evidence collection of ‘what works’ by academics and consultancies in a regime of performance targets and audit evaluation.²¹² Efforts to coordinate and integrate this complexity were ‘necessarily problematic’.²¹³

After 2006, there was a pronounced shift away from a neighbourhood focus until the formal end of ABIs and their local partnerships in 2010.²¹⁴ Concern about the sprawl of ABIs and their effectiveness prompted a Treasury review to ‘identify the ‘optimal geographical levels for governance and decision-making for functions directly linked to successful

²⁰⁸ Rob Imrie and Mike Raco, 'Community and the changing nature of Urban Policy', in Rob Imrie and Mike Raco (eds.), *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, community and urban policy* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2003); cited in Kintrea, 'Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods', 280.

²⁰⁹ Shaw and Robinson, 'Learning from Experience', 50.

²¹⁰ Lupton, 'Poverty Street', 138 and 172.

²¹¹ Syrett and North, 'New Labour and Deprived Neighbourhoods', 489.

²¹² Imrie, 'Governing the Cities', 138; Johnstone and Whitehead, 'British Urban Policy', 14-15. Also see A. Crawford, 'Joined-up but Fragmented: Contradiction, ambiguity and ambivalence at the heart of New Labour's "Third Way"', in R. Matthews and J. Pitts (eds.), *Crime Disorder and Community Safety* (London: Routledge, 2001), 59. Yet despite this research activity see Julia Griggs, Adam Whitworth *et al.*, 'Person- or place-based policies to tackle disadvantage? Not knowing what works', [academic study], Bristol: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2008.

²¹³ Syrett and North, 'New Labour and Deprived Neighbourhoods', 490. Also see Alan Harding, Stuart Wilks-Heeg, and Mary Hutchins, 'Business, Government and the Business of Urban Governance', *Urban Studies*, 37/5-6 (2000), 975-94, 984.

²¹⁴ Durose and Rees, 'Rise and Fall of Neighbourhood', 49; Syrett and North, 'New Labour and Deprived Neighbourhoods', 491.

economic development and regeneration of deprived areas'.²¹⁵ This sparked a move to city-regional governance, starting with Manchester in 2009.²¹⁶ At the same time, New Labour policy sharpened to a more punitive focus on so-called 'worklessness', understood as entrenched unemployment with cultural and well as economic roots.²¹⁷ This ran counter to shortage of jobs in areas most affected by deindustrialisation.²¹⁸

The unambiguous conclusion of a study by the conservative Policy Exchange, that 'urban policy has not worked' shaped the policy agenda from 2010.²¹⁹ The new Coalition government undertook wholesale dismantling of the roles, functions and operations of regeneration bodies, partnerships and other institutional infrastructure.²²⁰ For the first time since 1968, practically no national funding was available for neighbourhood social regeneration.²²¹ If urban policy still existed at national level, it was redirected towards economic competitiveness, especially after the Heseltine Review.²²² New funding streams and delivery mechanisms such as the Regional Growth Fund, Local Enterprise Partnerships

²¹⁵ HM Treasury, 'Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration', [government report], London: HM Treasury, 2007, Terms of Reference, 105.

²¹⁶ Durose and Rees, 'Rise and Fall of Neighbourhood', 46-7.

²¹⁷ Durose and Rees, 'Rise and Fall of Neighbourhood', 45.

²¹⁸ Syrett and North, 'New Labour and Deprived Neighbourhoods', 489.

²¹⁹ Leunig and Swaffield, 'Cities Limited', 45.

²²⁰ Pugalís and Liddle, 'Austerity Era Regeneration Part 1', 338; Lee Pugalís and Gill Bentley, 'Economic Development under the Coalition', *Local Economy*, 28/7-8 (2013), 665-78, 666. Global spending on regeneration was cut from £11.2bn in 2009/10 to £3.9bn in 2011/12: UK Parliament, 'Regeneration', 12.

²²¹ Lee Pugalís, Joyce Liddle *et al.*, 'Regeneration Beyond Austerity: A collective viewpoint', *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, 7/2 (2014), 188-97, 190. Residual programme spending targeting deprived areas averaged around £32m per year under the Coalition: Ruth Lupton and Amanda Fitzgerald, 'The Coalition's Record on Area Regeneration and Neighbourhood Renewal 2010-2015', [academic study], *Social Policy in a Cold Climate: Working Paper 19*, 2015, Summary, 4.

²²² Michael Heseltine, 'No Stone Unturned in Pursuit of Growth', [opinion piece], London: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2012. Also see Andrew Tallon, 'Urban Regeneration: Back to the 1980s?', *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, 5/3 (2012), 197-202, 197; Pugalís and Liddle, 'Austerity Era Regeneration Part 1', 336.

and Enterprise Zones were instruments of local economic development.²²³ Regeneration activity was for individual localities to determine, supported by a national 'toolkit'.²²⁴ Government focus was on 'localism', community involvement, economic growth, infrastructure and new housing.²²⁵ Ostensibly at odds with this was an initiative announced early in 2016 to tackle 'sink estates', but this appeared to foreshadow further 'social cleansing' in land-scarce London through loans to private developers.²²⁶ Carried forward from New Labour was support for city-regions and natural economic areas.²²⁷ This led to various incentivising 'City Deals', culminating in the combined authority agreements in 2015.²²⁸ Broughton *et al* saw this as 'centralised localism', privileging local authorities rather than third sector or neighbourhood interests.²²⁹

Cochrane remarked that the impact of (explicit) urban policy was dismissed as 'rather unsuccessful' throughout its existence.²³⁰ By academics, it was variously held to be conducted in a top-down way; yet lacking strategic clarity, commitment or sufficient resources. It was judged to be narrowly conceived: in piecemeal, short-term programmes

²²³ Kevin Broughton, Nigel Berkeley, and David Jarvis, 'Where next for neighbourhood regeneration in England? Two years on', *Local Economy*, 28/7–8 (2013), 817–27, 818–9.

²²⁴ Department of Communities and Local Government, 'Regeneration to Support Growth: What government is doing in support of community-led regeneration', [government report], London: Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010, 4. Also see Pugalís and Liddle, 'Austerity Era Regeneration Part 1', 335; Bentley and Pugalís, 'New Directions', Table 6, 261; John, 'Great Survivor', 697.

²²⁵ Andrew Tallon, 'Urban Regeneration in the UK under a Conservative Government', *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, 8/4 (2015), 320–22, 320.

²²⁶ 'Cameron—I will bulldoze sink estates', *The Sunday Times*, 10 January 2016; Department for Communities and Local Government, 'Prime Minister pledges to transform sink estates', [government press release], (updated 10 January 2016) <<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-pledges-to-transform-sink-estates>>, accessed 22 February 2016; 'David Cameron will not be able to redevelop "sink estates" without a fight', *Guardian*, 27 January 2016; 'David Cameron's £140m to tear down sink estates turns out to be a loan', *Guardian*, 27 February 2016.

²²⁷ Pugalís and Bentley, 'Economic Development under the Coalition', 670; Hastings, Bailey *et al.*, 'Coping with the Cuts?', 614.

²²⁸ Pugalís, Liddle *et al.*, 'Regeneration Beyond Austerity', 191; Raphael Heffron, 'Leadership and Policy Delivery in Regeneration Practice in a time of Austerity', *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, 7/3 (2014), 243–50, 245; Slack and Côté, 'Urban Governance', 31.

²²⁹ Broughton, Berkeley *et al.*, 'Where Next?', 88.

²³⁰ Cochrane, 'Understanding Urban Policy', 4.

often treating neighbourhoods in isolation; it did not bend mainstream activity; learning transfer was limited; and it failed to realise community potential, resulting in 'regeneration fatigue'.²³¹ Some criticism ignored wider public policy failure around mounting inequality, leaving it a convenient austerity target.²³² Regeneration activity carried inherent risks in complex, declining environments.²³³ The issue of impact is complicated by problems in establishing the counterfactual (the path in absence of the regeneration programme) and the long-term legacy.²³⁴ Overall, ABIs appeared more effective in improving places (such as environment, attitudes to the area) than the life-chances of their residents (such as unemployment, education).²³⁵ The gap between richest and poorest neighbourhoods, cities and regions largely persisted.²³⁶ Council-built estates remained at the bottom of the residential hierarchy.²³⁷

²³¹ Ivan Turok and John Shutt, 'The Challenge for Urban Policy', *Local Economy*, 9/3 (1994), 211–5, 212; Brian Robson, 'Urban Policy at the Crossroads', *Local Economy*, 9/3 (1994), 216–23, 217; Rob Atkinson, 'Urban Policy', in Nicholas Ellison and Christopher Pierson (eds.), *Developments in British Social Policy 2* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2003), 162; Johnstone and Whitehead, 'British Urban Policy', 13–14; Ian Sesnan, 'The Changing Role of Evaluation in Urban Regeneration: A review of the extent to which learning takes places between successive regeneration initiatives in England', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Westminster, 2006, 261; Syrett and North, 'New Labour and Deprived Neighbourhoods', 488; Tallon, 'Urban Regeneration', 271–3; Gill Davidson, David McGuinness *et al.*, "'It'll get worse before it gets better"—Local experiences of living in a regeneration area', *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, 7/1 (2013), 55–66, 56.

²³² As the Treasury put it: 'Targeted initiatives, including holistic regeneration programmes, have a role to play. But they should be part of a clear framework for tackling deprivation, rather than the main tool for doing so.' HM Treasury, 'Government Interventions in Deprived Areas: Cross-cutting review', [government report], London: HM Treasury, 2000, 2; cited in Atkinson, 'Urban Policy', 168.

²³³ Chris Khamis, 'Interviews with Author', 6 November 2013, 4 February 2014 and 3 March 2016.

²³⁴ Gripaios, 'Failure of Regeneration Policy', 572; Kintrea, 'Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods', 279; Lawless, 'Urban Regeneration', 24; Henderson, 'Wolverhampton', 1221.

²³⁵ Lawless, 'Urban Regeneration', 25–7; Paul Lawless and Christina Beatty, 'Exploring Change in Local Regeneration Areas: Evidence from the New Deal for Communities Programme in England', *Urban Studies*, 50/5 (2013), 942–58, 952–5.

²³⁶ Syrett and North, 'New Labour and Deprived Neighbourhoods', 487–8; Ruth Lupton, Alex Fenton, and Amanda Fitzgerald, 'Labour's Record on Neighbourhood Renewal in England: Policy, spending and outcomes 1997–2010', [academic study], *Social Policy in a Cold Climate: Working Paper 6*, 2013, 4.

²³⁷ Kintrea, 'Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods', 261.

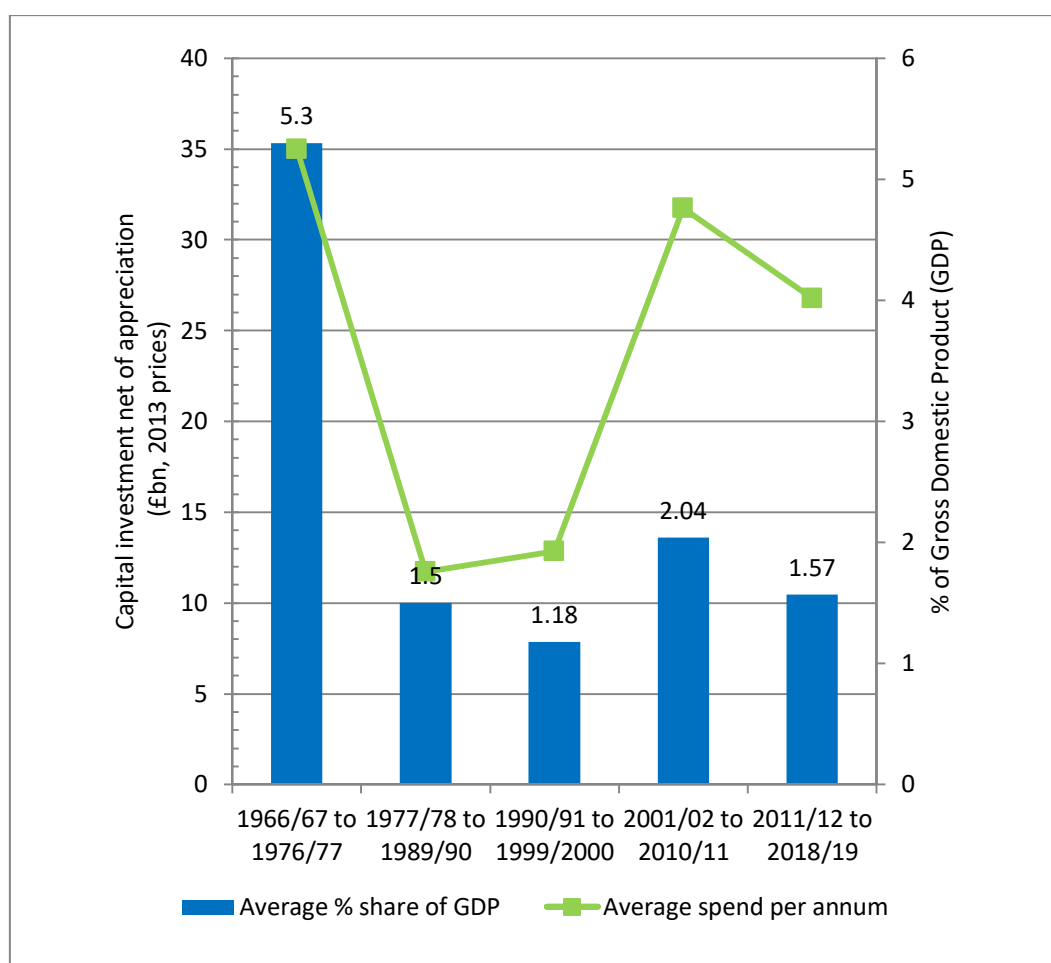
It was argued that even if rightly conceived, ABIs did not represent an adequate level of resources to tackle the legacy of deindustrialisation at the local level.²³⁸ Robson found spending targeted at the inner-city in the early 1990s was just two per cent of overall public expenditure, although Tallon reported a three times real-terms increase in regeneration spending between 1977 and 2005.²³⁹ Overall public sector net investment fell from 5.3 per cent of national income to 1.2 per cent in the 1990s, a small recovery and then a further reduction through austerity after 2010 (Figure 2.7).²⁴⁰

²³⁸ Robinson and Shaw, 'Urban Policy under the Conservatives', 231; Stephen Hall and Brendan Nevin, 'Continuity and Change: A review of English regeneration policy in the 1990s', *Regional Studies*, 35/5 (1999), 477–91, 480; Kintrea, 'Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods', 261; Syrett and North, 'New Labour and Deprived Neighbourhoods', 488; Sharpe, 'Neighbourhood Social Policy', 169.

²³⁹ Robson, 'Urban Policy at the Crossroads', 217; Tallon, 'Back to the 1980s?', 198.

²⁴⁰ Harding, Nevin *et al.*, 'Cities and Public Policy', 3.

Figure 2.7: Public Sector Net Investment, 1966 to 2019



Source: Alan Harding, Brendan Nevin, *et al.*, 'Cities and Public Policy', [government report], *Foresight Future of Cities Working Paper*, London: Government Office for Science, 2015, adapted from Table 1.1. Public Sector Net Investment 1966–67 to 2018–19.

Harding *et al* concluded that regeneration success is most likely through an ongoing 'layering' of successive ABIs in the same broad area; and where implicit urban policy choices and investments have supported developments locally. This may happen when governance bodies manage to align explicit and implicit policies in the service of broader, strategic and tactical objectives for city-regions. But critical is that sufficient actual or latent market dynamism exists to make place-based development sustainable over the longer-term.²⁴¹ Manchester and Salford are commonly cited as the best example of this political-economic

²⁴¹ Harding, Nevin *et al.*, 'Cities and Public Policy', 27.

configuration.²⁴² They demonstrated what Dodgshon called the 'principle of persistence' in their respective focus on East Manchester and Salford Quays (Figure 2.8 to Figure 2.10).²⁴³

Figure 2.8: Manchester Docks, 1971



Source: AirFoto, 'Manchester Docks, 1971', from http://rmhh.co.uk/manchester/pages/manchester_docks_1971.html. Reproduced with permission of Hall Genealogy Website: Rodney Hall, 12 February 2016.

²⁴² Rachel Tye and Gwyndaf Williams, 'Urban Regeneration and Central-Local Government Relations: The case of East Manchester', *Progress in Planning*, 42/1 (1994), 1–97; Iain Deas, Brian Robson, and Michael Bradford, 'Re-thinking the Urban Development Corporation 'experiment': the case of Central Manchester, Leeds and Bristol', *Progress in Planning*, 54/1 (2000), 1–72; Jamie Peck and Kevin Ward (eds.), *City of Revolution: Restructuring Manchester* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); Kevin Ward, 'Entrepreneurial Urbanism, State Restructuring and Civilizing "New" East Manchester', *Area*, 35/2 (2003), 116–27; Alan Mace, Peter Hall, and Nick Gallent, 'New East Manchester: Urban renaissance or urban opportunism?', *European Planning Studies*, 15/1 (2007), 51–65; Mike Raco, Stephen Henderson, and Sophie Bowlby, 'Changing Times, Changing Places: Urban development and the politics of space-time', *Environment and Planning A*, 40/11 (2008), 2652–73; Alan Harding, Michael Harloe, and James Rees, 'Manchester's Bust Regime?', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 34/4 (2010), 981–91; Euan Kellie, 'Rebuilding, Rebranding and Regenerating Manchester', *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, 7/4 (2014), 378–91; Stephen Hincks, 'Neighbourhood Change and Deprivation in the Greater Manchester City-Region', *Environment and Planning A*, 47 (2015), 430–49.

²⁴³ R. Dodgshon, 'Human Geography at the End of Time? Some thoughts on the notion of time-space compression', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 17 (1999), 607–20, cited in Raco, Henderson et al., 'Changing Times, Changing Places', 2670.

Figure 2.9: Salford Quays, c.2011



Source: 'Salford Quays c.2011', from <<http://www.bigbang-promotions.com/our-venues/4/salford-quays>>. © Big Bang Promotions. Reproduced with permission of Big Bang Promotions: Carrissa Etches, 20 June 2016.

Figure 2.10: MediaCityUK, Salford Quays, 2016



Source: Adam Carey, 'MediaCityUK, Salford Quays', 15 February 2016. © Adam Carey.

To conclude this section, regeneration as an explicit urban policy response was commonly (though not exclusively) expressed through successive area-based initiatives (ABIs), targeted at declining areas. If managing decline was a reality, causation remained contested. A pathological discourse exhibited in the national policy agenda about 'worklessness' and the 'dependency culture'; and at the local level, in stigmatised 'problem estates' made ABIs a convenient austerity target by 2010. Inherent tensions affecting the rationale, design, funding, community influence and delivery of regeneration at national level encouraged fragmentation locally. The academic literature suggested that while neighbourhoods have distinctive circumstances and trajectories ('place matters'), they should not be treated in isolation. Rather, they operate as related elements within urban and regional systems; affected by structural forces and governance over time. Some places saw significant gains through persistent layering of ABI effort, commonly in areas also benefitting from market forces. As with the end of 'Big State' slum clearance in the 1970s, regeneration was now a localised issue. Powers granted to 'city-regions' offered potential alignment of economic development with wider urban-based programmes. But austerity-localism concomitantly implied hollowing-out capacity through cuts and privatisation, with unequally depleted resources adversely affecting urban areas lacking economic growth.²⁴⁴ In prophesy finally realised, 'while urban policy may be fast disappearing, urban problems are not'.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁴ See SN 3: Austerity.

²⁴⁵ Wilks-Heeg, 'Urban Policy Comes Full Circle?', 1276. Wilks-Heeg was writing in 1996. Also see Broughton, Berkeley *et al.*, 'Where Next?', 82.

Conclusions

This chapter successively discussed local government's ability to act; its postwar impact on place, which coincided with deindustrialisation and other adverse structural factors; and the central-local state response to urban decline and 'problem places'. So local authorities were not simply service providers in delineated sites, but retained the capacity and inclination to lead their areas: physically reshaping them within increasingly complex governance environments, including their own reorganisation into larger local government entities. But this role was bounded by wider economic and regulatory relations; by the 'stickiness' of inherited institutional arrangements, cultural norms and policy preferences; and by competing pressures and limited resources, often leading to failure. The planning, design and management deficiencies of system-built housing were significant in being both widespread and in their enduring legacies in places like Smethwick. Influential governance cultures of municipal labourism and public landlordism largely gave way to network governance and in regeneration, partnership-working. These were sometimes instrumental, unstable constructs; other times an energising 'space' for community engagement, particularly at neighbourhood level.²⁴⁶ One possible consequence of the 2010 breakpoint is 'centralised localism', privileging (depleted) local authorities at the expense of varied stakeholder networks vital to local renewal and growth. The theme of local partnerships, a cornerstone of effective regeneration, is therefore also vital to assessing the Smethwick experience.

²⁴⁶ The distinction between 'site', 'space' and 'sphere' in place governance is discussed in Chapter 1.

CHAPTER 3 URBAN AREAS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE— SMETHWICK IN CONTEXT

This chapter analyses the structural economic and social drivers shaping Smethwick as an urban area, addressing the first of the three detailed research questions. It locates Smethwick within the Birmingham-based conurbation, discusses wider urban processes and makes comparisons with Salford in relation to Manchester. It sets the context for later chapters about governance, place management, housing and regeneration, but the structural aspect is a significant and freshly-told story in its own right. It firstly examines the physical development of Smethwick through its original urbanisation to 1945, and the impact of regional decentralisation of population and economic activity. Sections follow on postwar deindustrialisation and immigration.

3.1 Urbanisation, City-Regions and the position of Smethwick

This section outlines the evolution from the compact Victorian city, with its strong civic culture, to the scale and complexity of the contemporary city-region. It traces Smethwick's rise as a manufacturing centre wedged between Birmingham and the Black Country and second only to Salford in population density. It demonstrates how regional-scale drivers affected Smethwick after 1945.

Urbanisation and industrialisation were interwoven processes driving economic change during the nineteenth-century.¹ Half the population lived in urban areas by 1841.² The advent of the factory system enabled the development of a range of industries, such as textiles and engineering, from which multiplier effects rippled through local economies.³ Turnpikes, canals and railways moved goods; while the penny post, telegraph and telephone speeded communication.⁴ Development was influenced by pre-existing settlements and the early exploitation of the major coalfields, but many new towns and cities were added by the dominant process of concentration and centralisation.⁵ This reduced production costs and provided access to a strong trading and market intelligence network to secure credit and to manage risk. Manchester, in particular, possessed what Hall termed a 'unique synergy' and 'innovative milieu'.⁶ For him, 'Manchester was without challenge the first and greatest industrial city in the world'.⁷

The central area of Birmingham maintained a complex of linked industries which Sargant Florence still described in the 1940s as 'industrial swarming'.⁸ However, from the 1860s, firms such as Tangyes and Evered had relocated from congested Birmingham to adjacent Smethwick, to exploit plentiful and cheap land along the canals and new railways

¹ David Reeder and Richard Rodger, 'Industrialisation and the City Economy', in Martin Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain—Volume III 1840–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 553.

² Tim Leunig and James Swaffield, 'Cities Limited', [opinion piece], London: Policy Exchange, 2007.

³ P. E. Lloyd, 'Manchester: A study in industrial decline and economic restructuring', in H. P. White (ed.), *The Continuing Conurbation: Change and development in Greater Manchester* (Farnborough: Gower, 1980), 72, 74.

⁴ Martin Daunton, 'Introduction', in Martin Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain—Volume III 1840–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 13.

⁵ David Herbert, 'Towns and Cities', in Vince Gardiner and Hugh Matthews (eds.), *The Changing Geography of the United Kingdom* (3rd edn.; London: Routledge, 2000), 190.

⁶ Peter Hall, *Cities in Civilization: Culture, innovation, and urban order* (London: Phoenix, 1999), 344–7.

⁷ Hall, 'Cities in Civilization', 310.

⁸ Cited in Reeder and Rodger, 'Industrialisation', 582.

(see later Figure 3.15).⁹ This reflected a shift in the structure of Birmingham industry from workshop to factory, and dispersal from the inner-city to create new industrial nodes (Figure 3.1).¹⁰ Birmingham provided financial and marketing services for the small metal trades and mining in the Black Country, as well as being a market for its often semi-finished output. But Birmingham, being less physically central to its conurbation than Manchester, played a less dominant role in the West Midlands.¹¹ Indeed Mumford, in his Foreword to the *Conurbation Study*, described it as a 'complex of towns, boroughs, urban spores, submerged villages and open land'.¹²

The English regions and their 'capitals' developed distinctive cultural and political lives in the Victorian period.¹³ They were cultural as well as economic magnets.¹⁴ Victorian cities combined competition with an active associational life.¹⁵ This provided the basis for a strong municipal culture in the regional cities, and the notions of local pride, improvement and achievement. Birmingham Corporation built reservoirs 73 miles away at the Elan Valley to supply water to the city by 1904.¹⁶ The opening of the Manchester Ship Canal in 1894, a bold response to economic downturn in the 1870s, created a major inland

⁹ G. C. Baugh, M. W. Greenslade, and D. A. Johnson, 'Smethwick', in M. W. Greenslade (ed.), *History of the County of Stafford* (The Victoria History of the Counties of England, XVII; London: University of London, Institute of Historical Research, 1976), 111-2.

¹⁰ M. J. Wise and P. O' N. Thorpe, 'The Growth of Birmingham 1800–1950', in M. A. Kinvig, J. G. Smith *et al.* (eds.), *Birmingham and its Regional Setting: A scientific survey* (Birmingham: British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1950), 222.

¹¹ Anthony Sutcliffe, 'The "Midland Metropolis": Birmingham 1890–1980', in George Gordon (ed.), *Regional Cities in the UK 1890–1980* (London: Harper and Row, 1986), 26-7.

¹² West Midland Group, *Conurbation: A Survey of Birmingham and the Black Country* (London: Architectural Press, 1948), 3.

¹³ Daunton, 'Introduction', 14.

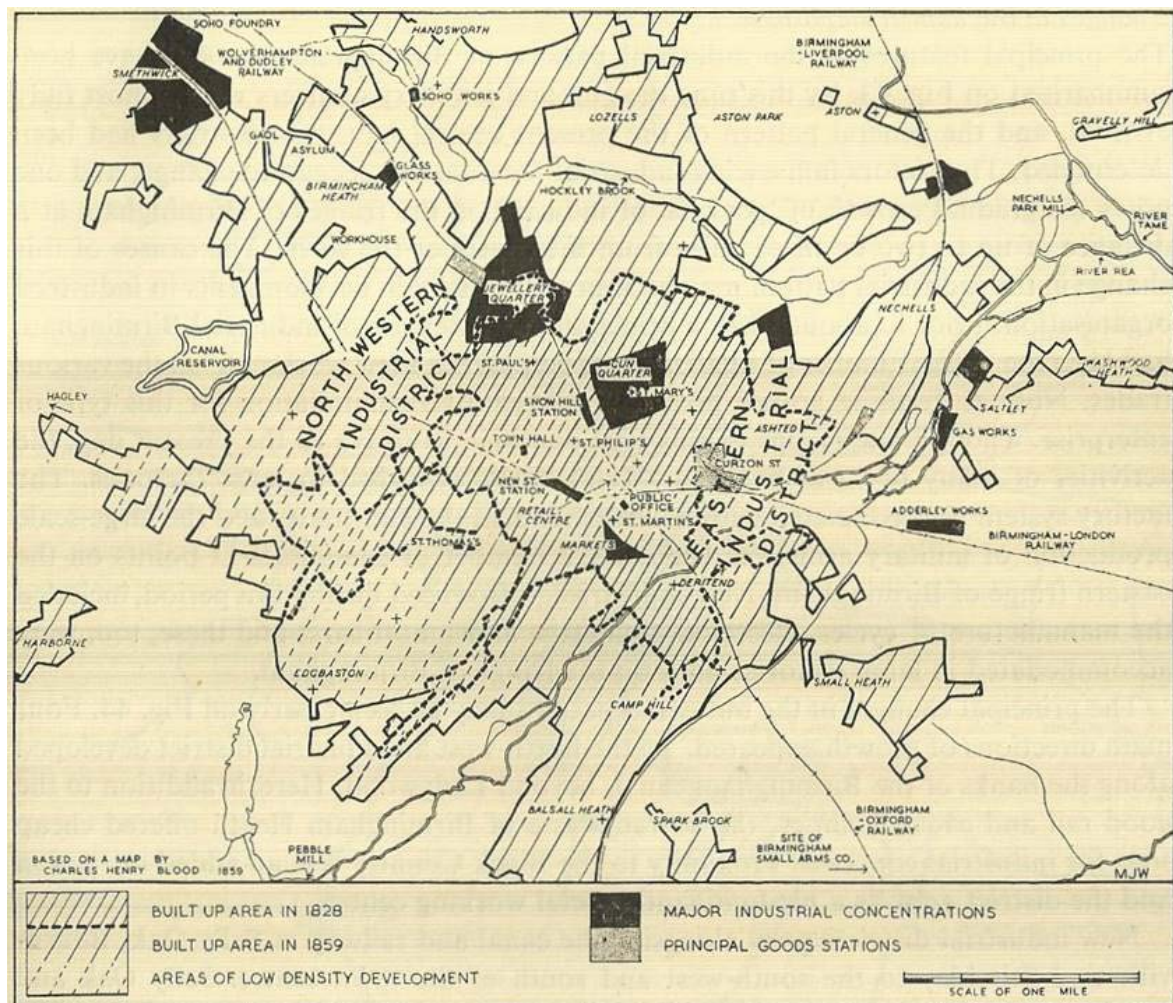
¹⁴ George Gordon, 'Introduction', in George Gordon (ed.), *Regional Cities in the UK 1890–1980* (London: Harper and Row, 1986), 2.

¹⁵ Daunton, 'Introduction', 48.

¹⁶ Asa Briggs, *Borough and City, 1865–1938* (History of Birmingham, Vol. II; London: Oxford University Press, 1952), 89-91.

port at Salford, the UK's fourth largest by 1910.¹⁷ This stimulated the adjacent development of the giant Trafford Park industrial estate.¹⁸ Infrastructure investment benefitted often family-run firms in a symbiotic relationship between business interests and urban governance.¹⁹

Figure 3.1: Regional Pattern of Birmingham, 1859



Source: M. J. Wise and P. O' N. Thorpe, 'The Growth of Birmingham 1800–1950', [Map], from M. A. Kinvig et al., *Birmingham and Its Regional Setting: A Scientific Survey*, 1950, 221. © British Science Association. Reproduced with permission of British Science Association: Rupa Kundu, 11 July 2016.

¹⁷ W. H. Chaloner, 'The Birth of Modern Manchester', in Charles Carter (ed.), *Manchester and its Region* (Manchester: British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1962), 142.

¹⁸ Brian Rodgers, 'Manchester—Metropolitan planning by collaboration and consent; or civic hope frustrated', in George Gordon (ed.), *Regional Cities in the UK 1890–1980* (London: Harper and Row, 1986), 43.

¹⁹ Daunt, 'Introduction', 25, 44.

The largest cities played a dominant role in the development of a 'mass urban culture'.²⁰ Migration and population turnover fell as the new centres consolidated.²¹ Daunton and Pooley identified how working-class neighbourhoods, marked by poor conditions and poverty, matured and gained in solidarity, with dense patterns of sociability through hobbies or clubs or female bonds of support and sharing.²² Living was highly localised and distance to work small.²³ Class divisions with internal social homogeneity eventually provided the basis for trade unionism and with working-class enfranchisement, the growth of the Labour Party. Daunton identified the subsequent loss of local 'glue' as urban elites retreated from civic life and family businesses were taken over.²⁴

Transport was important as both the 'maker and breaker of cities'.²⁵ Transport costs fell dramatically in the twentieth-century, since oil, gas and electricity energy are essentially geographically neutral, unlike bulky nineteenth-century coal use.²⁶ The advent of more flexible transport systems such as private cars led to deconcentration and decentralisation. From the 1920s, this fostered new residential suburbs, the redevelopment of older urban areas and the creation of city-regions around the major conurbations.²⁷ Affordability improved, with falling build costs, low interest rates, and rising real incomes in the interwar years.²⁸ Jobs consequently followed people as well as leaving cramped locations.²⁹ So in

²⁰ Cited in Gordon, 'Introduction', 2.

²¹ Daunton, 'Introduction', 46.

²² Daunton, 'Introduction', 46; Colin G. Pooley, 'Patterns on the Ground: Urban form, residential structure and the social construction of space', in Martin Daunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain—Volume III 1840–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 443.

²³ Gordon, 'Introduction', 5.

²⁴ Daunton, 'Introduction', 54.

²⁵ Herbert, 'Towns and Cities', 190.

²⁶ Leunig and Swaffield, 'Cities Limited', 15.

²⁷ Pooley, 'Patterns on the Ground', 438.

²⁸ Daunton, 'Introduction', 34-5.

addition to postwar deindustrialisation, cities suffered from a continuing urban-rural drift, or net decentralisation of economic activity.³⁰ The overall impact was highly uneven, including a persistent 'north-south divide' fuelled by the growing dominance of London as a global megacity, but with the inner-city and traditional ports most strongly affected.³¹ Early twenty-first century cities encompassed flows and functional linkages between their core and outer city, not just physical contiguity.³²

Constraints within English cities remained as significant as the choice of residential location.³³ Cheshire highlighted persistent urban income segregation since at least the nineteenth-century, as well the agglomeration benefits of functional, poor neighbourhoods.³⁴ Continued migration of affluent households to the suburban and rural fringes and especially the commuting routes of rail and motorway left concentrations of poverty and social exclusion in the old urban cores.³⁵ Figure 3.2 shows population change in the West Midlands region in the fifty years after 1951 and the pattern of deprivation in

²⁹ Ken Spencer, Andy Taylor *et al.*, *Crisis in the Industrial Heartlands—A Study of the West Midlands* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 90; S. Fothergill and G. Gudgin, *Unequal Growth: Urban and regional employment change in the UK* (London: Heinemann, 1982), 103-8.

³⁰ Peter A. Wood, *Industrial Britain: The West Midlands* (London: David Charles, 1976), 227; Ivan Turok and Nicola Edge, 'The Jobs Gap in Britain's Cities: Employment loss and labour market consequences', [academic study], Bristol: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1999, 50; Katie Williams, 'Urban Form and Infrastructure: A morphological review', [government report], *Foresight Future of Cities Working Paper*, London: Government Office for Science, 2014, 14.

³¹ Herbert, 'Towns and Cities', 193; Leunig and Swaffield, 'Cities Limited', 16-17.

³² Williams, 'Urban Form', 14; Herbert, 'Towns and Cities', 190; Stephen Ward, 'Planning Impacts since 1945 and the Future', *Planning and Urban Change* (2nd edn.; London: SAGE, 2004), 275; Michael Pacione, *Urban Geography: A Global Perspective* (2nd edn.; Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 676.

³³ Pooley, 'Patterns on the Ground', 439.

³⁴ Paul Cheshire, 'Policies for Mixed Communities: Faith-based displacement activity?', *International Regional Science Review*, 32/3 (2009), 343-75, 348 and 373.

³⁵ Williams, 'Urban Form', 12, 14; Centre for Cities, 'Cities Outlook 2009', [opinion piece], 2, London: Centre for Cities, 2009, 62; Centre for Cities, 'Cities Outlook 2014', [opinion piece], 7, London: Centre for Cities, 2014, 48; Daniel Dorling, Jan Rigby *et al.*, 'Poverty, Wealth and Place in Britain, 1968 to 2005', [academic study], Bristol: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2007, xiv.

2004. This spatial polarisation and growing inequality presented a major policy issue.³⁶ By the 1990s, the interaction of stock obsolescence, surplus housing and unpopular neighbourhoods culminated in high vacancy rates and abandonment in declining areas such as Liverpool, Manchester, Salford and Smethwick.³⁷ But metropolitan areas saw large population gains in the 2000s, such as 19 per cent in Manchester.³⁸ Figure 3.3 shows the transformation in Sandwell in 1981–2015.

Urbanisation and industrialisation transformed Smethwick from an ‘insignificant hamlet’ to be a ‘rising and important town’ by 1896.³⁹ Its population exploded from 1,265 to 55,064 in the century to 1901, in the area that eventually formed the county borough.⁴⁰ This was due to its location, being in the transport corridor from the Black Country into the expanding Birmingham (Figure 3.4). Originally part of the Staffordshire parish of Harborne, in 1675 Smethwick was only a ‘discontinued village’ strung-out along the Birmingham-Dudley Road.⁴¹ This was turnpiked in 1760 and the first canal followed as the industrial revolution got underway.⁴²

³⁶ Ruth Lupton, 'Poverty Street—The dynamics of neighbourhood decline and renewal', [academic study], Bristol: Policy Press, 2003, 220. Also see Howard Glennerster, John Hills *et al.*, 'One Hundred Years of Poverty and Policy', [academic study], York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2004; Danny Dorling, 'New Labour and Inequality: Thatcherism continued?', *Local Economy*, 25/5–6 (2010), 406–23.

³⁷ Glen Bramley, 'Low Demand for Housing: Incidence, causes and UK national policy implications', *Urban Studies*, 39/3 (2002), 393–422, 419–420; Ian Cole and Brendan Nevin, 'The Road to Renewal: The early development of the housing market renewal pathfinder programme in England', [academic study], York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2004, 10.

³⁸ Williams, 'Urban Form', 16.

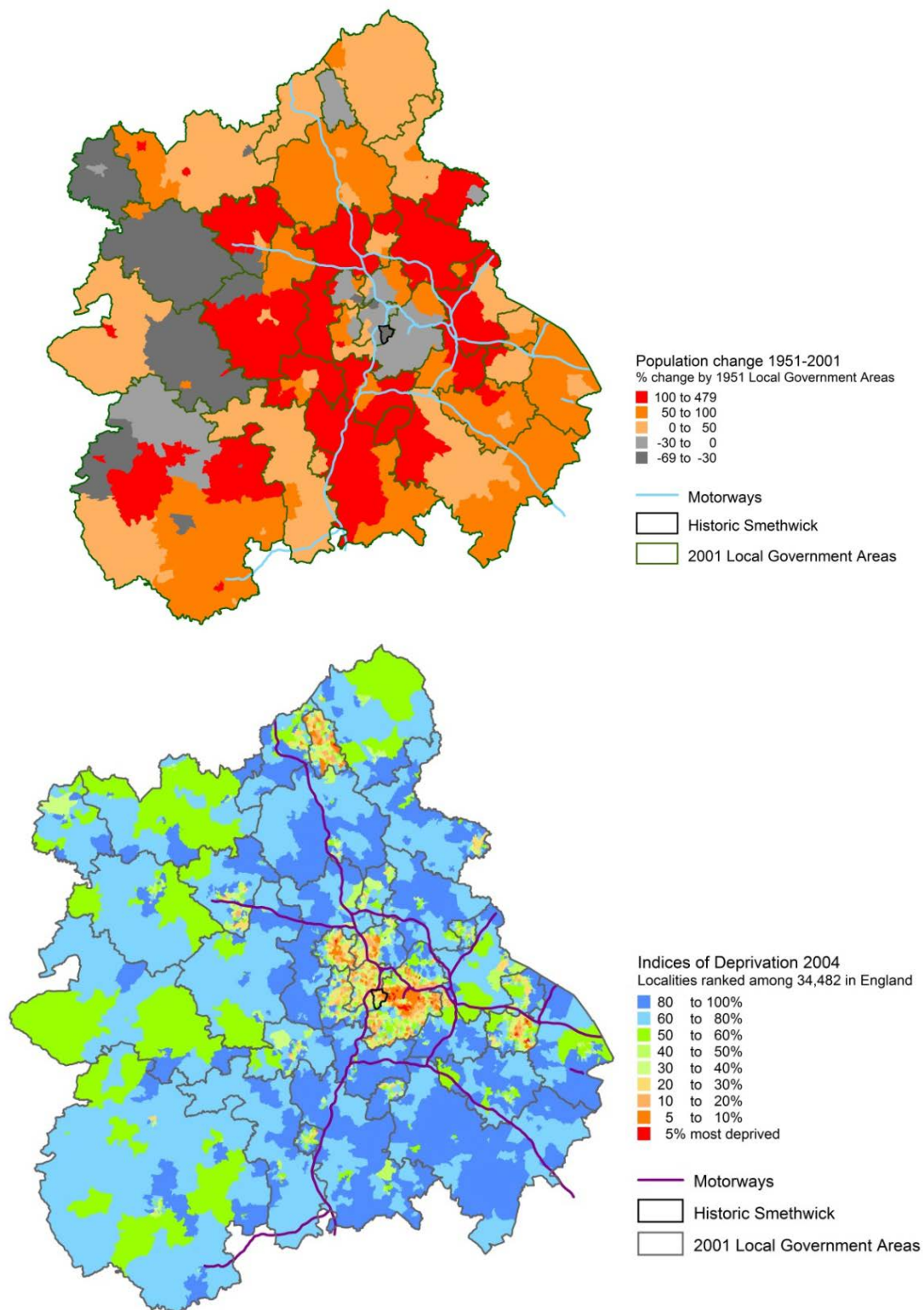
³⁹ F. W. Hackwood, *Some Records of Smethwick*, ed. Alan Vernon (Studley: Brewin, 2001), 1, Preface.

⁴⁰ See Special Note 5: Creating a Population time series for historic Smethwick. In comparison, Salford grew from 18,088 to 220,957: Special Note 7: Comparative data for historic Salford.

⁴¹ J Ogilby, *Britannia*, as cited in Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 87.

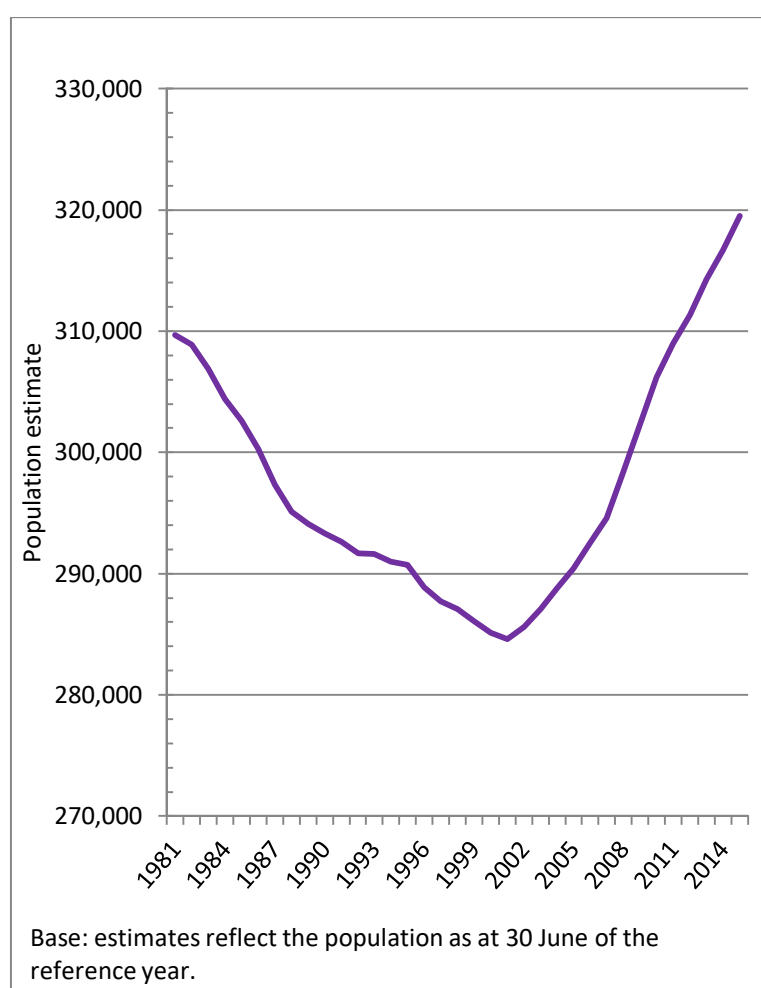
⁴² See Special Note 4: Defining Smethwick—Changing boundaries and area identity.

Figure 3.2: Pattern of Population change in the West Midlands, 1951–2001 and Regional Deprivation, 2004



Source: Special Note 8: Postwar Population change in English Urban areas; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 'Indices of Deprivation 2004', [statistical report], London: ODPM, 2004. Adapted census and map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A UK Data Service product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

Figure 3.3: Population change in Sandwell, 1981 to 2015



Source: Office for National Statistics, 'Population Estimates—Local authority based by five year age band', [statistical report]. Source: Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

Urbanisation in Smethwick accelerated from the 1830s, with working-class housing built adjacent to Chance's glassworks and amid the burgeoning factories along Rolfe Street, Smethwick's first commercial centre.⁴³ Proximity to Birmingham stimulated the growth of Bearwood in the south as a compact suburban neighbourhood, following the opening of the railway into New Street from Harborne in 1874.⁴⁴ By 1890, housing development in the rest of Smethwick, now to byelaw standards, extended southwards along Windmill Lane. It then expanded westwards to the Uplands area and again southwards to the Cape area, to link

⁴³ Special Note 17: Social and Physical change in Marshall Street and West Smethwick.

⁴⁴ D. E. Yates and J.D. Halverson, *Building Bearwood: The why, how and who* (Smethwick: D. E. Yates, 1999), 10.

with Bearwood by 1918. Interwar, mainly municipal housing then covered the last farmland and spread over the old western parish boundary into Oldbury.

Figure 3.4: Historic Transport Corridor, West Smethwick, 2007



Source: Adam Carey, 'Canalside, Chance's Glassworks—West Smethwick', 7 April 2007. © Adam Carey. The Grade II-listed Stewart aqueduct was built by Thomas Telford and carries Brindley's Old Main Line Canal (opened 1769) over Telford's New Main Line Canal (1828). Alongside and above the New Main Line Canal is the Stour Valley section of the West Coast Main Line (1852), all three being bridged by the M5 motorway (1970). To the right is Chance's Glassworks (1824). The author noticed this scene as 16 year-old in 1980, on a canal holiday from Birmingham to Nantwich. He did not know where he was, but the transport layering prompted him to take a picture from the barge, soon to be forgotten. Rediscovering its location in Smethwick in 2007 was memorable.

Like Smethwick, Oldbury industrialised rapidly after the canal opened in 1772.⁴⁵ It was combined with the rural area of Warley to become an urban district in 1894, the same year as Smethwick.⁴⁶ This southern area urbanised in the twentieth-century through speculative and municipal suburban housing development.⁴⁷ It included extensive interwar and postwar 'overspill' activity by Smethwick Corporation.⁴⁸ Smethwick's earlier nineteenth-century expansion was a function of its larger employment base and proximity to Birmingham. Unlike Oldbury, Smethwick also developed strongly from the south, at Bearwood (Figure 3.5). Land transfer to Smethwick in 1928 was compensated by gains to the west when Oldbury became a municipal borough in 1935.⁴⁹ Interwar housing accounted for 59 per cent of Oldbury's housing stock in 1945, compared to only 19 per cent in Smethwick.⁵⁰ While Oldbury had a similar economic structure to Smethwick, its mainly suburban residential environment proved more stable and popular. In contrast, the proximity of (often polluting) industry and housing in Smethwick resulted in a poor environment in half of the town.

⁴⁵ Janet Sullivan, 'Paying the Price for Industrialisation: Life in a Black Country town, Oldbury 1780–1900', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 2014, 10, 71–2.

⁴⁶ Warley Corporation, 'Warley Official Guide', [council report], Cheltenham: Ed. J. Burrow, 1967, 19.

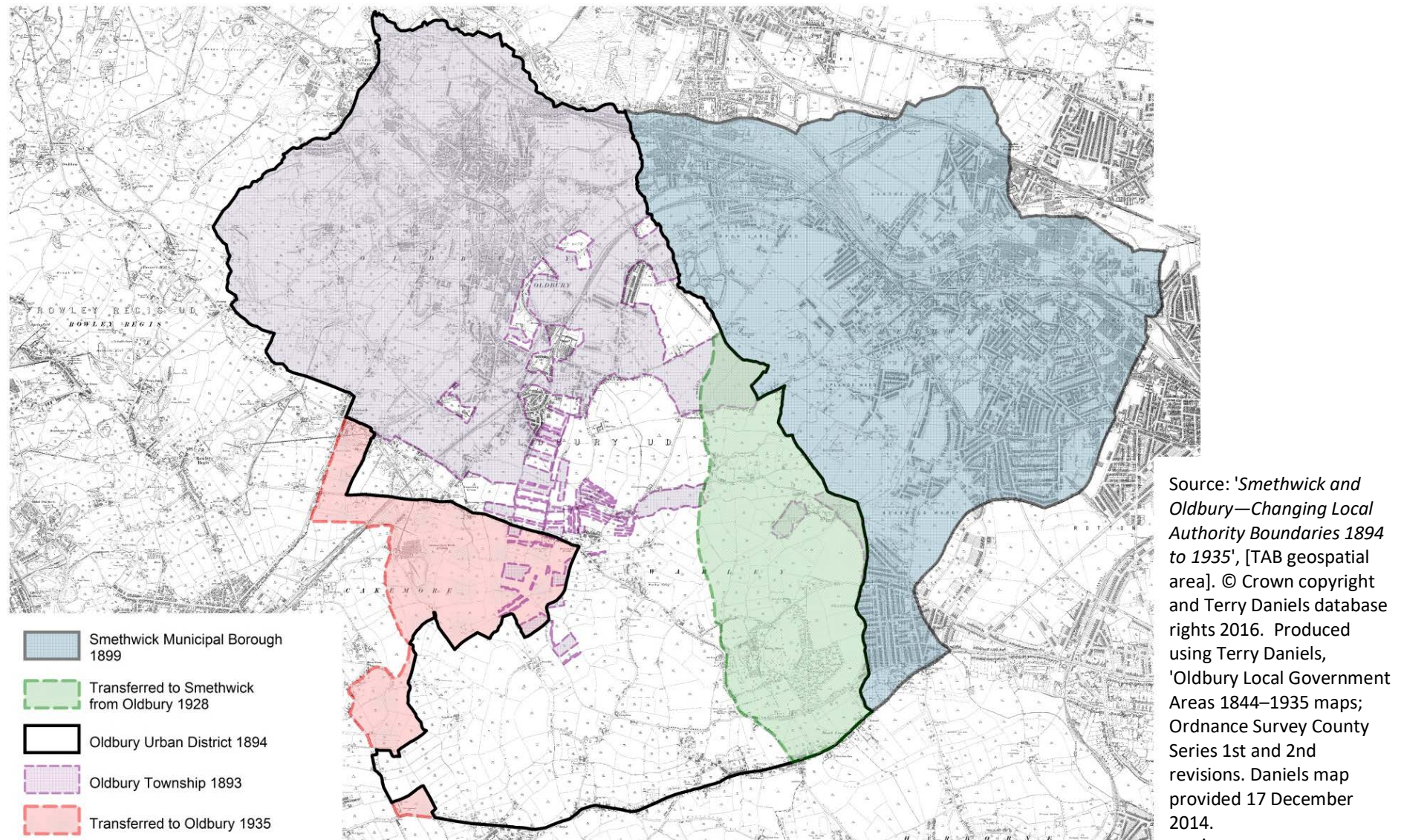
⁴⁷ E. J. Parker, 'The Growth and Development of Oldbury: A conurbation town', unpublished BA dissertation, Wolverhampton Polytechnic, 1978, 9.

⁴⁸ See Special Note 23: The Smethwick Development Plan and 'overspill' housing.

⁴⁹ Terry Daniels, 'Historic boundaries of Oldbury', [personal communication to author], 17 December 2014.

⁵⁰ West Midland Group, 'Conurbation Study', 92.

Figure 3.5: Smethwick and Oldbury—Physical development by c.1904 and changing Local Authority boundaries, 1894 to 1935



By 1945, Smethwick was fully developed, but from successive surges that left it with a dense but disjointed urban form. As Lodder put it, 'Every town has a focal point doesn't it? And Smethwick hasn't got one'.⁵¹ A detailed map of land-use from the *Conurbation Study* shows a band of industry north of the transport corridor punctuated by isolated housing areas and unusually for a town of its size, three retail centres (Figure 3.6).⁵² The author's characterisation of the residential hierarchy and neighbourhood function in Smethwick in 1945 is shown as Figure 3.7. At only four square miles in size even after its 1928 expansion, Smethwick was the most densely-populated provincial county borough after Salford.⁵³ The interwar housing helped reduce overcrowding in the older wards, where population density peaked in 1921 around sixty persons per acre (Figure 3.8). However, by 1945 some 6,000 homes were judged by the West Midland planners to be in 'slum' or 'near-slum' condition and in need of replacement.⁵⁴ Like Salford, Smethwick had run out of land to build on, with only one percent of its area vacant in 1945, compared to 25 per cent in Oldbury and 30 per cent in Birmingham.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Steve Lodder, 'Interview with Author', 25 June 2013. Lodder worked in Sandwell housing department from 1973-2007 and was area and then district housing manager for Smethwick in 1980-98.

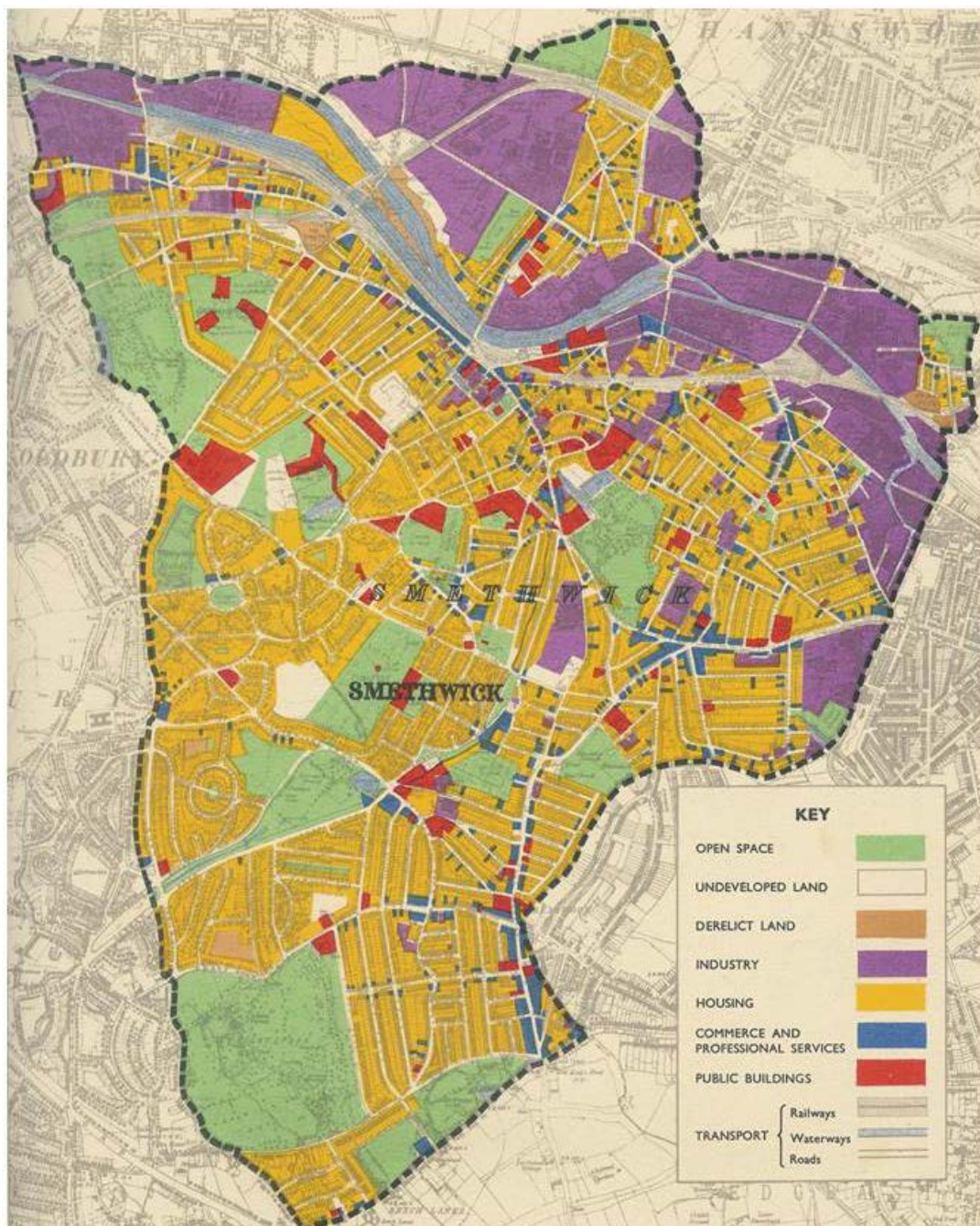
⁵² Cape Hill (£2.2 million annual turnover in 1961) and Bearwood (£2m) each had less than one-fifth of the town's total trade and the third, High Street (£1m) which culminated in the civic quarter, had less than one-tenth: T. W. Freeman, *The Conurbations of Great Britain* (2nd edn.; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966), 15; David Thorpe, 'The Main Shopping Centres of Great Britain in 1961: Their locational and structural characteristics', *Urban Studies*, 5/2 (1968), 165-206, 169.

⁵³ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 88.

⁵⁴ West Midland Group, 'Conurbation Study', 91. Similarly, 21 per cent of factory buildings in Smethwick were defined as 'outmoded', compared to 5 per cent in Oldbury and 8 per cent in Birmingham: West Midland Group, 'Conurbation Study', 148-9.

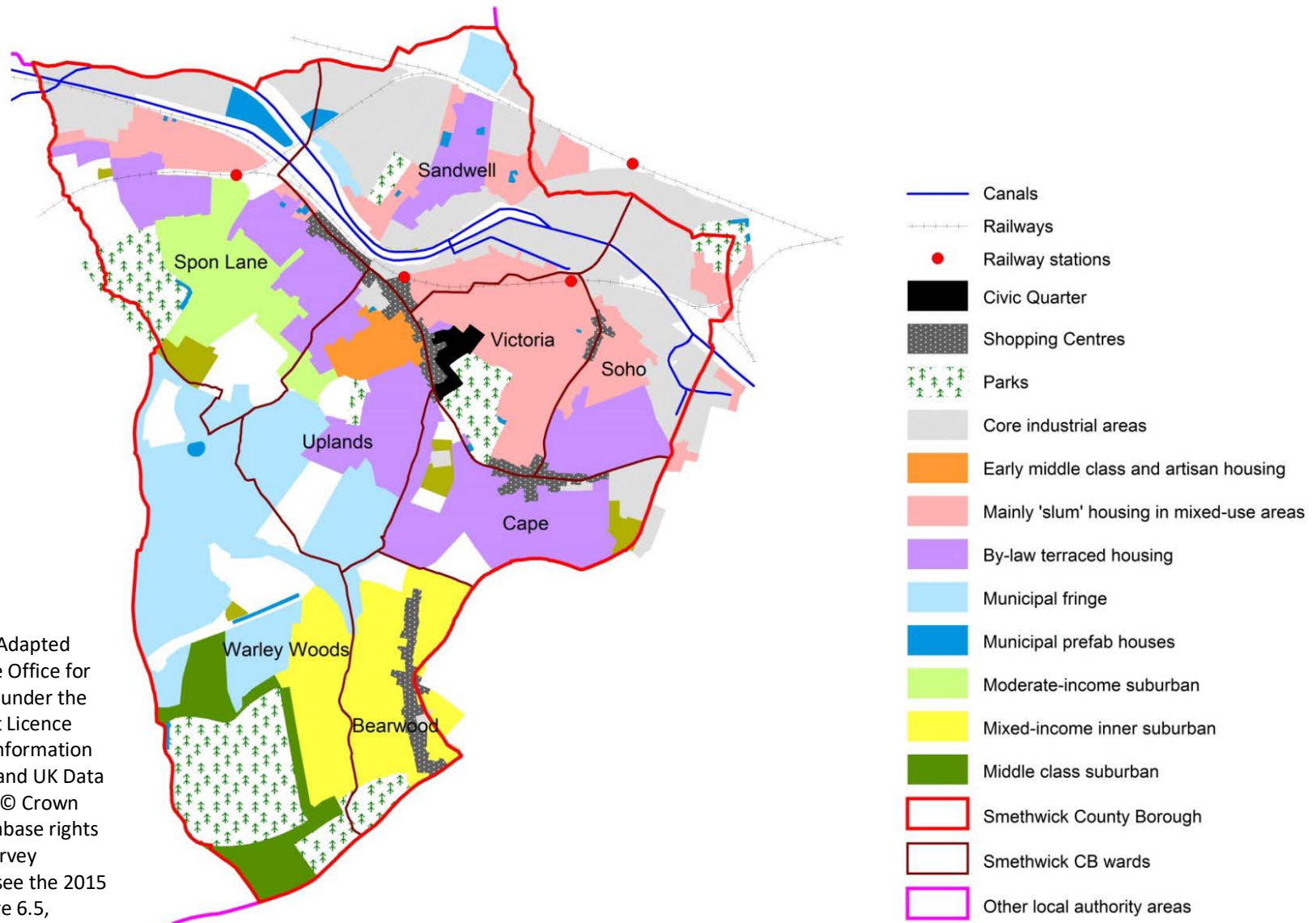
⁵⁵ West Midland Group, 'Conurbation Study', 172; G. A. McWilliam, 'Planning the City of the Future: II. Salford', in Charles Carter (ed.), *Manchester and its Region* (Manchester: British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1962), 262.

Figure 3.6: Smethwick Land Use, 1945



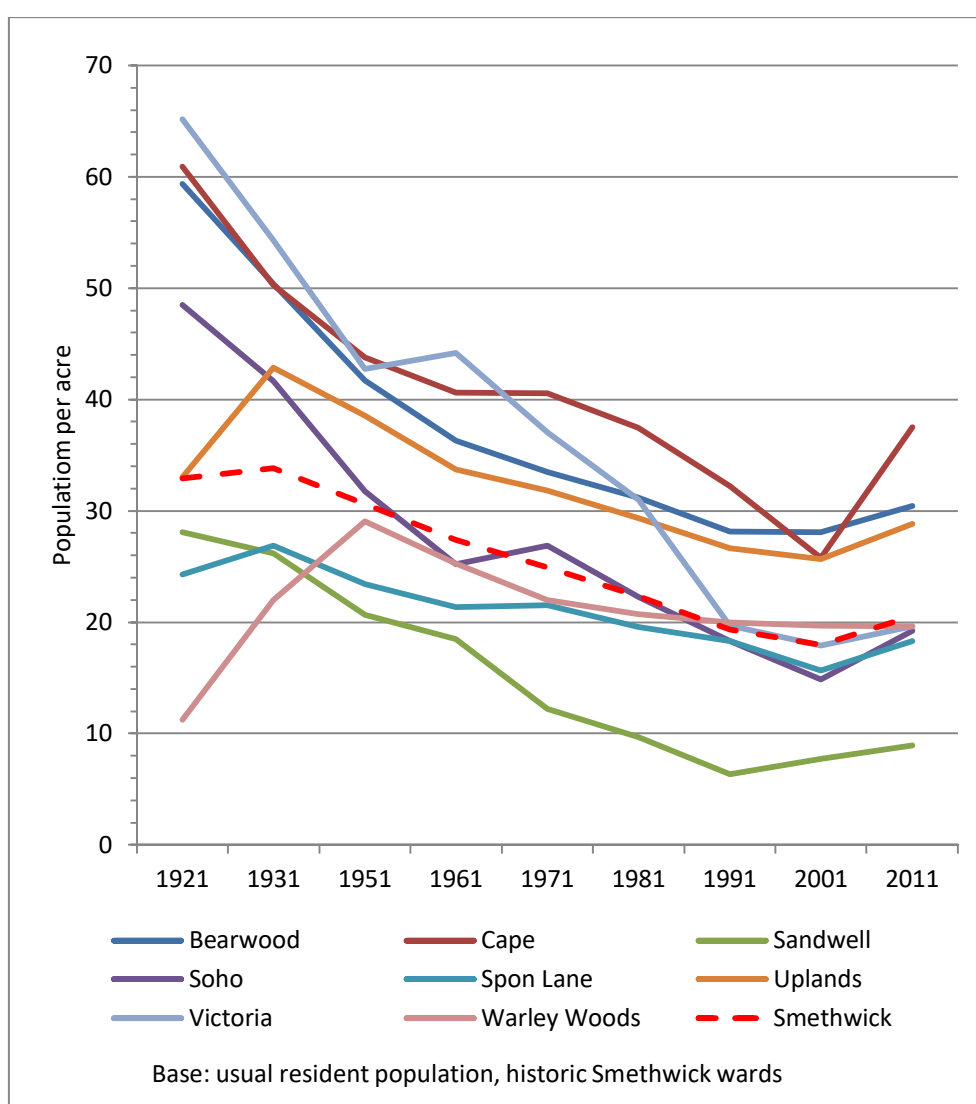
Source: 'Smethwick Land Use, 1945', [Diagram], from West Midland Group, *Conurbation: A Survey of Birmingham and the Black Country*, 1948, Plate 1 after 160. © Royal Institute of British Architects. Reproduced with permission of British Architectural Library, RIBA: Jonathan Makepeace, 18 February 2016.

Figure 3.7: Urban Form and Neighbourhood Function—Smethwick in 1945



Source: Author's characterisation. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. Landmark Information Group Ltd/EDINA and UK Data Service products. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153. Also see the 2015 equivalent in Figure 6.5, Chapter 6.

Figure 3.8: Ward Population Density in Smethwick, 1921 to 2011



Source: Special Note 5: Creating a Population time series for historic Smethwick. Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

Smethwick was at its apogee. A 1956 townscape study nonetheless included Smethwick as an ‘integral part of the urban structure of Birmingham’, even though it was administered separately (Figure 3.9).⁵⁶ The *Conurbation Study* had grouped Smethwick with Birmingham for analytical purposes: ‘between which it is difficult to draw any dividing

⁵⁶ M. B. Stedman, 'The Townscape of Birmingham in 1956', *Transactions and Papers of the Institute of British Geographers*, (1958), 225–38, 227.

line'.⁵⁷ Several major firms advertised their location as 'Birmingham' or 'Smethwick, Birmingham'.⁵⁸ Even Smethwick Corporation's *Industrial Handbook* referred to it as a 'town on the outskirts of Birmingham'.⁵⁹ For Smethwick residents, 'going to town' meant Birmingham city centre.⁶⁰ Salford Corporation similarly reported: 'For many Salford people 'town' means the main streets of Manchester'.⁶¹ Figure 3.10 demonstrates this parallel. But critically and succinctly, Maddison explained Smethwick as 'an important manufacturing centre wedged strategically between Birmingham and the Black Country having strong links with both, but not truly belonging to either'.⁶²

The particular built form of Smethwick created from its economic role, and its ambivalent position at the core of the conurbation consequently influenced its sense of place and later, its urban management.⁶³ As Dutton observed: 'So very close to the heart of the UK's second city, but so far away'.⁶⁴ Local government reorganisation placed Smethwick in the Black Country (Chapter 4). When Smethwick entered into decline, and in

⁵⁷ West Midland Group, 'Conurbation Study', 81 and also see 112.

⁵⁸ These included GKN, Mitchells & Butlers, Midland Red, Chance Brothers and Hope's: Smethwick Corporation, 'Smethwick Staffordshire—The Official Industrial Handbook', [council report], Cheltenham: Ed. J. Burrow, 1959; Smethwick Corporation, 'Smethwick Staffordshire—The Official Industrial Handbook', [council report], Cheltenham: Ed. J. Burrow, 1963; Warley Corporation, 'Official Guide (1967 edn.)'.

⁵⁹ Smethwick Corporation, 'Industrial Handbook (1959 edn.)', 1. Although far more Smethwick residents travelled to work in Birmingham (11,361) in 1951 than in Oldbury and West Bromwich (2,582 combined); commuting into Smethwick was evenly balanced (9,473 from Birmingham and 9,006 from its two Black Country neighbours): General Register Office, 'Census 1951 England and Wales: Report on Usual Residence and Workplace', [statistical report], London: HMSO, 1956, Table 5. Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

⁶⁰ Geoffrey Price, 'Smethwick: The evolution and modern character of an industrial county borough', unpublished BA dissertation, University of Leicester, 1963, 79.

⁶¹ McWilliam, 'Salford', 262.

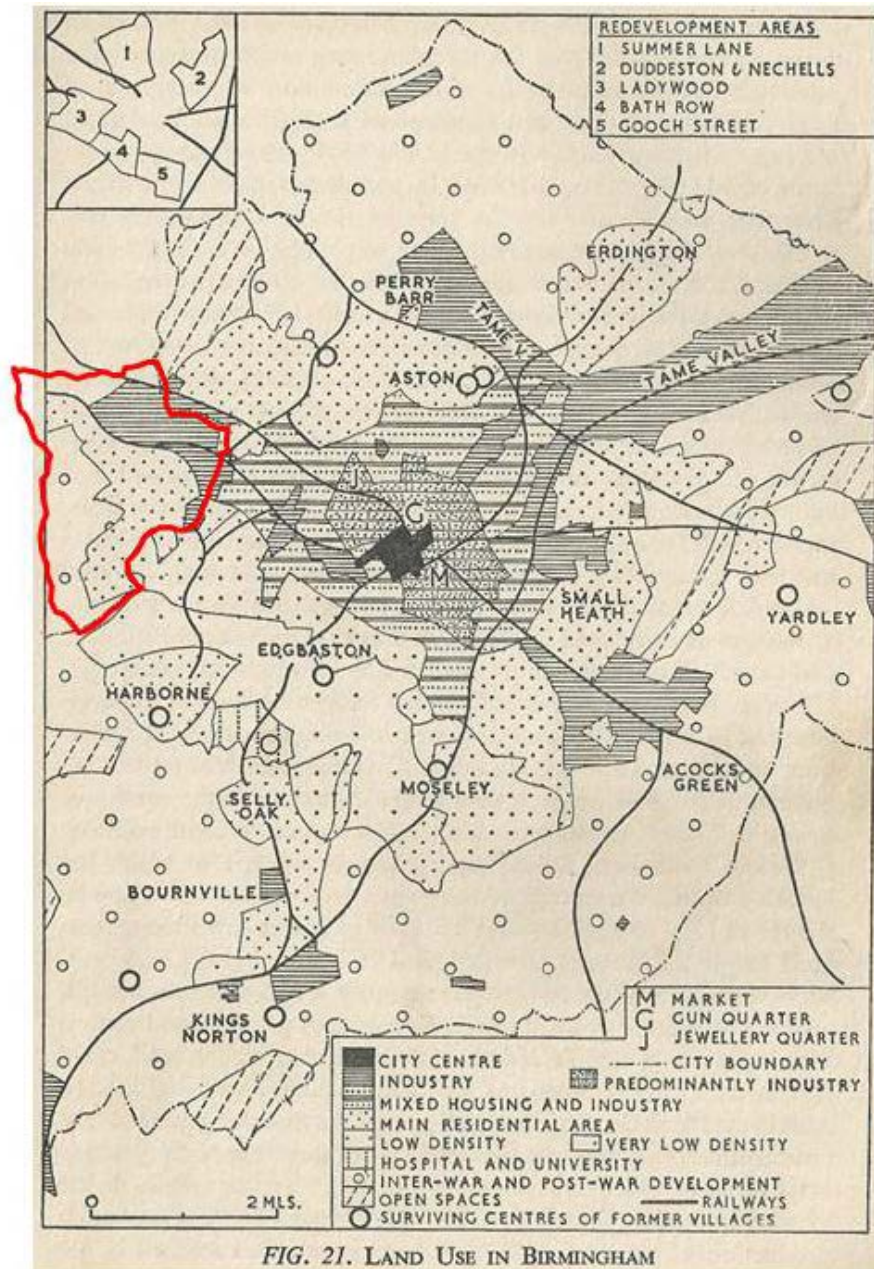
⁶² John Maddison, *Smethwick in Old Photographs* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1989), back cover.

⁶³ Paul Jeffrey, 'Interview with Author', 13 June 2014. Jeffrey was a Director at ECOTEC Research & Consulting.

⁶⁴ Clive Dutton, 'Interview with Author', 30 August 2013. Dutton worked at BCDC, headed Tipton City Challenge and was Sandwell Head of Regeneration and later Director of Planning and Regeneration at Birmingham.

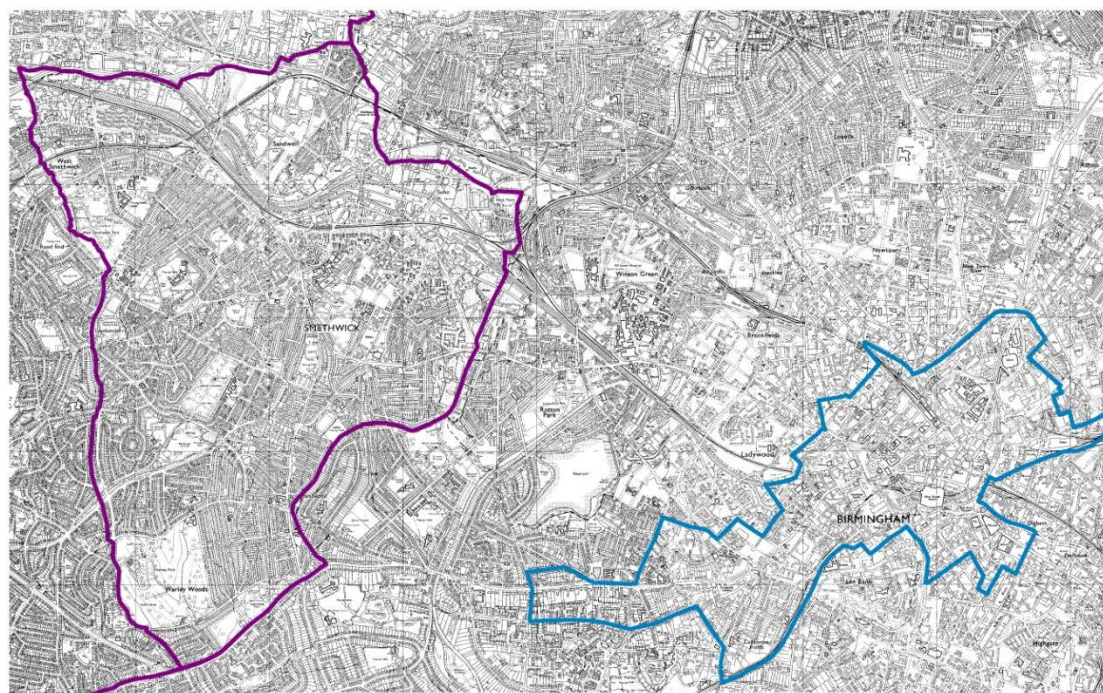
contrast to Salford and Manchester, no real cross-boundary economic pull or regeneration policy logic was available to it.

Figure 3.9: Relationship of Smethwick to Birmingham, 1966

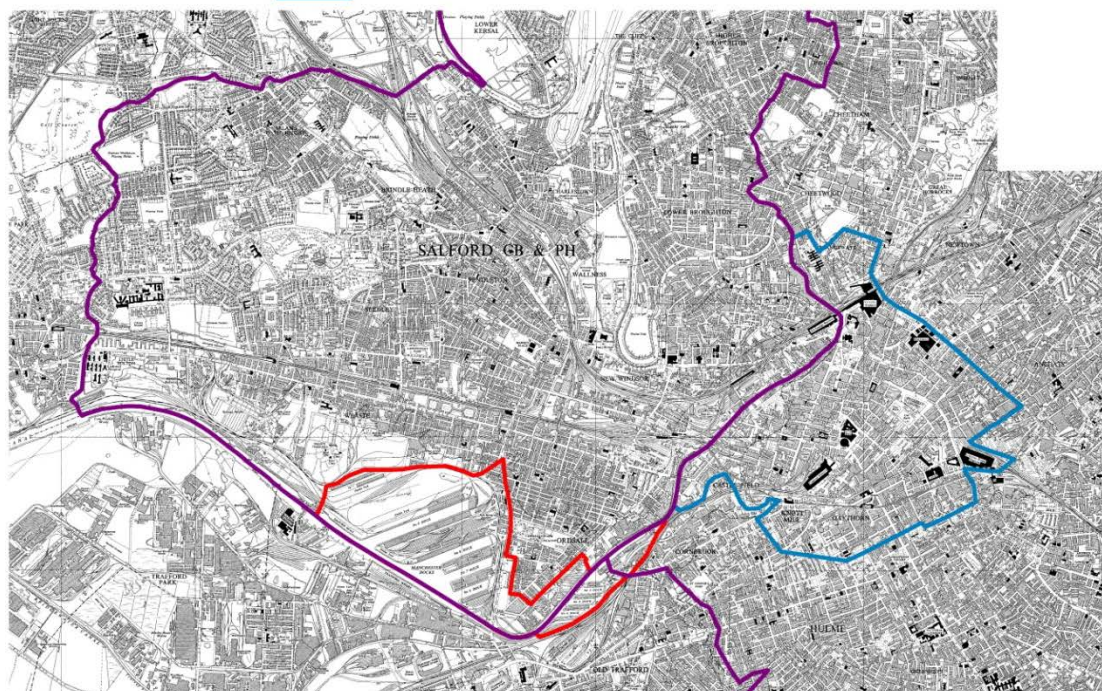


Source: 'Fig 21. Land use in Birmingham', [Map], from T. W. Freeman, *The Conurbations of Great Britain*, 1966, 78. © T. W. Freeman. Reproduced with permission of Manchester University Press: Rebecca Moore, 12 February 2016. Smethwick boundary added by author.

Figure 3.10: Relationship of Smethwick and Salford to Central Business Districts, 1961



- Local authority boundaries 1945
- Manchester Docks
- Conurbation central business districts (CBD) 1961



Source: West Midlands and SE Lancashire Conurbation Centres, General Register Office, 'Census 1961 England and Wales: County Reports—Lancashire and Warwickshire', London: HMSO, 1963. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A Landmark Information Group Ltd/EDINA product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153. Maps at common scale.

Smethwick was from the 1930s strongly affected by the decentralisation of population away from the urban core of the West Midlands region.⁶⁵ Unlike the conurbation fringes, it was not possible to build in Smethwick the suburban environments people wanted. Street interdependency and community rootedness, which continued in the austerity years, loosened: 'It became one of those places where if you made your way in life, if you became slightly more affluent, your aim was to get out of Smethwick.'⁶⁶ Some left for Canada, Australia and New Zealand.⁶⁷ Council tenants were rehoused into the 'overspill' estates of Bristnall and Brandhall, in Oldbury.⁶⁸ Economic decline in Smethwick hastened the process.⁶⁹

Smethwick's population peaked at 84,406 in 1931 and dipped to 78,407 by 1951 (Figure 3.11). Thereafter, it declined to a floor of 44,770 in 2001, a postwar fall of 41.4 per cent (Figure 3.12).⁷⁰ This was the fifth largest urban provincial decrease in England, after Salford, Liverpool, Manchester and Gateshead.⁷¹ This steep decline was partly due a reduction in household size, from an average of 3.94 persons to 2.53 in the seventy years to 2001, reflecting the national pattern. To maintain population urban areas needed to enlarge their housing stock. But as well as demographic change in net migration and

⁶⁵ West Midland Group, 'Conurbation Study', 77-8.

⁶⁶ Trevor Harris, 'Interview with Author', 10 September 2013. Harris was a retired Smethwick Headteacher who grew up in Smethwick.

⁶⁷ Frequent expatriate contributions to the Smethwick Heritage Centre's *Facebook* page are testament to this. One example is a press cutting dating from 1954/55, when a family of ten were presented with the Corporation *Handbook*: Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, 'Mayoral send-off for family going to Australia', *Facebook* [showcase website], <<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10154442969580138&set=p.10154442969580138&type=3&theater>>, accessed 2014, article resupplied by Maggie Edwards, 9 September 2016.

⁶⁸ See SN 23: Smethwick Development Plan and 'overspill' housing.

⁶⁹ Price, 'Industrial County Borough', 73.

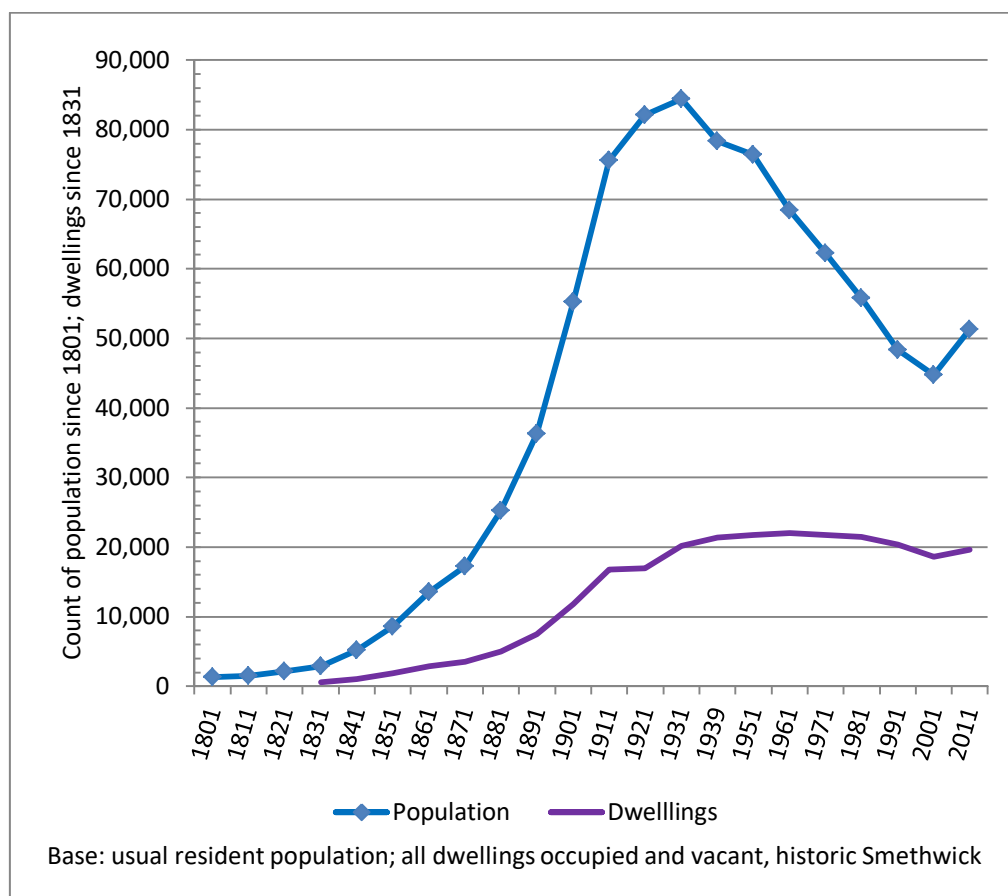
⁷⁰ SN 5: Smethwick Population.

⁷¹ Special Note 8: Postwar Population change in English Urban areas.

household size, Smethwick experienced a net loss of housing, an issue discussed in Chapter 4.

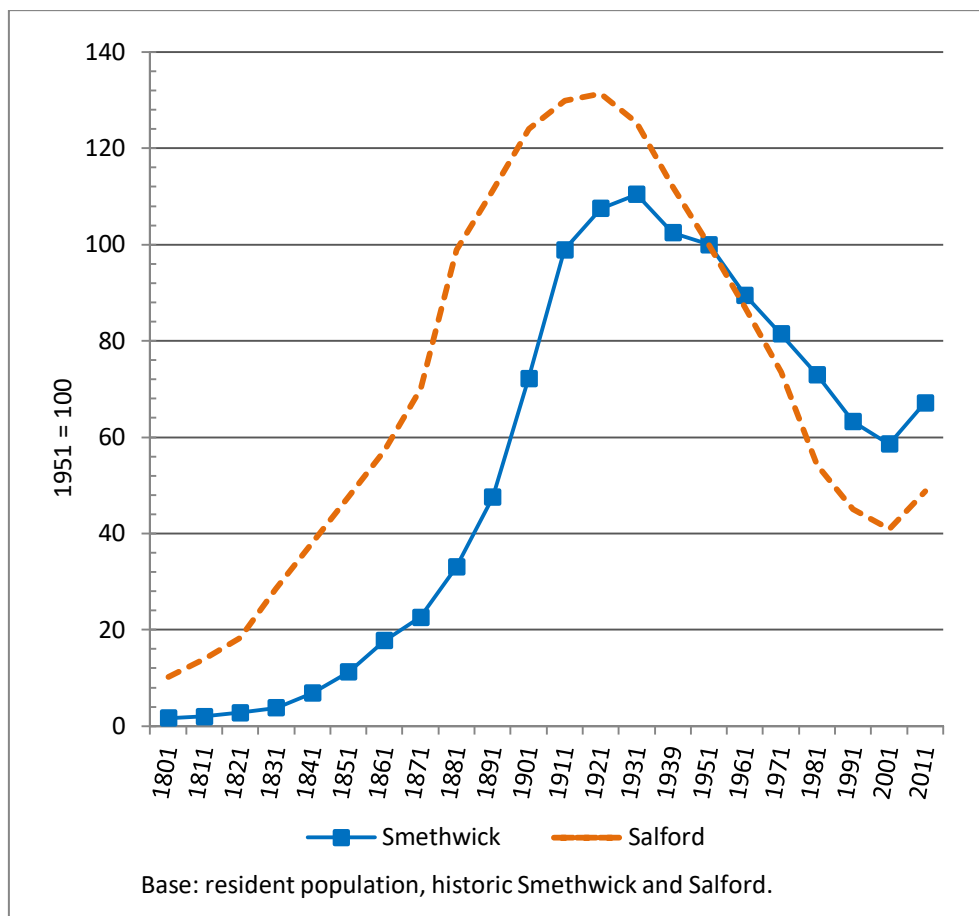
To conclude this section, urbanisation and industrial growth created cities eventually widened by transport technologies into socio-economically polarised, city-regions. These forces created Smethwick as an industrial town, haphazard in its structure, ambiguously placed at the centre of the conurbation. The dense, increasingly obsolete built form left it, by 1945, vulnerable to the wider decentralisation of population and economic activity away from the urban core of the West Midlands region.

Figure 3.11: Smethwick Population and Housing, 1801 to 2011



Source: Special Note 5: Creating a Population time series for historic Smethwick; Special Note 6: Housing data for Smethwick. Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

Figure 3.12: Indexed Population change, historic Smethwick and Salford, 1801 to 2011



Source: Special Note 5: Creating a Population time series for historic Smethwick; Special Note 7: Comparative data for historic Salford. Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

3.2 Deindustrialisation: 'Great names' to 'shatter-zone'

Smethwick's nineteenth-century growth, from hamlet to a major industrial centre with a claim to 'some of the largest and most important manufactories in the Kingdom', inspired the new town's motto: 'Industry and Genius'.⁷² Yet after a postwar swansong, its economic decline was fundamental. This section examines the impact of deindustrialisation on Smethwick, and with selective reference to Salford, focussing on its major firms and the social consequences of unemployment, poverty and the identity of Smethwick itself.

Deindustrialisation describes the decline of manufacturing within advanced western economies.⁷³ Low economic growth and postwar loss of world export markets made deindustrialisation particularly acute in the UK and its manufacturing heartlands.⁷⁴ Decline has been variously linked to the operation of public policy.⁷⁵ However, Flynn and Taylor argued that the impact of macroeconomic, industrial or housing policy factors, while important, obscured the reality of long-term restructuring of local economies, culminating

⁷² The quote is from Smethwick's Petition to the Privy Council in 1894 for incorporation; Hackwood, 'Some Records of Smethwick', 106. 'Labore et Ingenio'; 'Industry and Genius' is the motto of James Watt reversed and is included in the Armorial Bearings of the County Borough of Smethwick, granted in 1907: K. W. Inskip, 'Smethwick from Hamlet to County Borough: A brief history', [research study], Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1966, inside front cover. Also see Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4.

⁷³ Alec Cairncross, 'What is Deindustrialisation?', in Frank Blackaby (ed.), *Deindustrialisation* (NIESR Economic Policy Papers 2; London: Heinemann, 1979), 5; John MacInnes, 'The Deindustrialisation of Glasgow', *Scottish Affairs*, 11 (1995), 73–95, 1.

⁷⁴ Andrew Gamble, *Britain in Decline: Economic policy, political strategy and the British state* (3rd edn.; London: Macmillan, 1990); 10–18; C. F. J. Brown and T. D. Sheriff, 'Deindustrialisation—Background paper', in Frank Blackaby (ed.), *Deindustrialisation* (NIESR Economic Policy Papers 2; London: Heinemann, 1979), 241.

⁷⁵ On macroeconomic policy see Spencer, Taylor *et al.*, 'Industrial Heartland', 13; 'Foundries founder as demand dips', *Financial Times*, 17 July 1980. On regional policy, especially the operation of industrial development certificates see H. B. Rodgers, 'Manchester Revisited—A profile of urban change', in H. P. White (ed.), *The Continuing Conurbation: Change and development in Greater Manchester* (Farnborough: Gower, 1980), 32; Leunig and Swaffield, 'Cities Limited', 21–4; Ken Spencer, 'The West Midlands—An Economy in Crisis', in Victor Hausner (ed.), *Urban Economic Change: Five case studies* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 237. On the impact of postwar redevelopment see Ward, 'Planning Impacts', 271; Spencer, Taylor *et al.*, 'Industrial Heartland', 88–9.

in the slump after 1979.⁷⁶ UK manufacturing suffered from low levels of investment and productivity, overcapacity and declining profitability.⁷⁷ Less efficient plant was ultimately vulnerable to closure or job loss in periods of national economic strain.⁷⁸ Weak management and poor industrial relations is also identified, particularly affecting the car industry and its big assembly plants.⁷⁹

The early postwar prosperity of the West Midlands reflected a strong base in vehicles, metal goods, metal manufacture, and mechanical and electrical engineering.⁸⁰ But this specialisation eventually worked in reverse, due to a failure to diversify.⁸¹ Structural change concentrated producers into fewer, larger units with a national and international scale of operation, delocalisation of ownership, and new forms of interlinkage where small firms became more dependent on the large. By 1977, twenty-five companies represented 48 per cent of manufacturing employment in the metropolitan county, mainly concentrated in a small number of large plants.⁸² The responses of these 'prime movers' to external economic shocks included disinvestment and relocation, cost-cutting and product design and marketing shifts.⁸³ These changes were swiftly transmitted through supply-chains.⁸⁴

⁷⁶ N. Flynn and A. P. Taylor, 'Inside the Rust Belt: An analysis of the Decline of the West Midlands Economy: Part 1—International and National Economic Conditions', *Environment and Planning A*, 18/7 (1986), 865–900, 874.

⁷⁷ Flynn and Taylor, 'Economic Conditions', 868; M. Marshall and J. Mawson, 'The West Midlands', in D. J. Damesick and P. A. Wood (eds.), *Regional Problems, Problem Regions and Public Policy in the UK* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 99.

⁷⁸ Ward, 'Planning Impacts', 272; Marshall and Mawson, 'West Midlands', 103. Also see M.W. Danson, W.F. Lever, and J.F. Malcolm, 'The Inner City Employment Problem in Great Britain, 1952–76: A shift-share approach', *Urban Studies* 17/2 (1980), 193–210, 206.

⁷⁹ Marshall and Mawson, 'West Midlands', 101; Anthony Sutcliffe and Roger Smith, *Birmingham 1939–1970* (History of Birmingham, Vol. III; London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 174.

⁸⁰ Spencer, Taylor *et al.*, 'Industrial Heartland', 53; Spencer, 'Economy in Crisis', 219.

⁸¹ Spencer, 'Economy in Crisis', 218. Sutcliffe and Smith, 'Birmingham 1939–1970', 470; Marshall and Mawson, 'West Midlands', 97.

⁸² Spencer, 'Economy in Crisis', 219. Spencer, Taylor *et al.*, 'Industrial Heartland', 53, 68.

⁸³ Spencer, Taylor *et al.*, 'Industrial Heartland', 93–4; Michael Parkinson, 'The Thatcher Government's Urban Policy, 1979–1989: A review', *The Town Planning Review*, 60/4 (1989), 421–40, 428.

As late as 1963, the corporation's *Industrial Handbook* could describe 'the manufacturing firms of Smethwick—GKN, Chance, Tangye, Phillips, and many others' as being 'of world-wide standing'.⁸⁵ Thus Chance's exported ground-breaking lighthouse technology to 78 countries in the century to 1951; its postwar general glassware went to 93 countries (Figure 3.13).⁸⁶ Avery, located at the historic Soho Foundry since 1895, was the world's largest maker of weighing machines.⁸⁷ Birmid was Europe's largest group of foundries.⁸⁸ Hope's made metal windows, including for the House of Commons, Bank of England and London County Hall.⁸⁹ Smethwick was home to Mitchells & Butlers, the major brewery.⁹⁰ At Bearwood was Midland Red, one of the largest English bus companies.⁹¹ Smethwick also had niche producers: Best & Lloyd made chandeliers for Buckingham Palace, the London Hilton Hotel ballroom and the Orient Express; Charles Carr made church bells and gun barrels; Commercial X-Rays was a leader in gamma and isotope testing; and Camm was an awarding-winning maker of stained glass.⁹²

⁸⁴ Spencer, 'Economy in Crisis', 221; Spencer, Taylor *et al.*, '*Industrial Heartland*', 17; Marshall and Mawson, '*West Midlands*', 100.

⁸⁵ Smethwick Corporation, '*Industrial Handbook* (1963 edn.)', 9. See Special Note 9: Smethwick as 'the most heavily industrialised area in England'.

⁸⁶ Toby Chance and Peter Williams, *Lighthouses: The race to illuminate the world* (London: New Holland, 2008), viii-ix; Warley Corporation, '*Official Guide* (1967 edn.)', 8.

⁸⁷ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, '*Smethwick*', 114. W. K. V. Gale, '*Soho Foundry*', [research study], Smethwick: W. & T. Avery, 1948, 39.

⁸⁸ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, '*Smethwick*', 114; 'Birmid workers to reunite', *Express & Star*, 10 May 2007.

⁸⁹ Henry Hope and Sons, '*Hope's Windows: A short history of Henry Hope and Sons Ltd, 1818 to 1958*', [research study], Smethwick: Henry Hope and Sons Ltd, 1958, 13.

⁹⁰ J. W. Harland and K. Davies, *Mitchells & Butlers: A History of Cape Hill Brewery, 1878–2002* (Smethwick: Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, n.d.).

⁹¹ Roy C. Anderson, *A History of the Midland Red* (Newton and Abbot: David Charles, 1984), Appendix IV.

⁹² Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, *Smethwick's Industrial Heritage*, ed. David Bryant (Smethwick: Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, 2008), 23-5, 63-7, 128-9; 'Florence Camm family were a real glass act', *Birmingham Post*, 27 March 2009. Also see 'Made in Smethwick!', *Sunday Mercury*, 3 January 2009.

This clustering began in 1796, when Boulton and Watt moved their epochal steam engine production from Handsworth to their new Soho Foundry next to the canal in Smethwick.⁹³ Chance Brothers operated in West Smethwick from 1824 and a ribbon of industry down to Soho developed, including several ironworks.⁹⁴ The firm of Fox Henderson, which played a key role in the construction of the Crystal Palace, failed in 1856 with the loss of 2,000 jobs.⁹⁵ Its Heath Street site was soon occupied by Nettlefolds & Chamberlain, a Birmingham screw manufacturer and part of the merger that created giant GKN in 1902.⁹⁶ As seen, Tangyes, whose hydraulic jacks launched the *Great Eastern*, also moved from Birmingham in 1864.⁹⁷ Further major firms arrived by 1914, notably Birmid and Phillips.⁹⁸ Smethwick adjusted to the recession of the 1870s, the depression of the interwar years and changes in demand after each World War. New growth sectors emerged during the 1930s and local interdependence diffused their benefits.⁹⁹ It was a prime example of the shift in the conurbation economy to light and medium engineering.¹⁰⁰ Unemployment fell to 3.1 per cent by 1935, the lowest rate in the conurbation.¹⁰¹ The town played a major role in the war effort and its munitions output was heavily targeted in the 1940–41 Blitz.¹⁰²

⁹³ According to K. W. Inskip, the Soho Foundry was 'described as "the first factory in the engineering industry in the world"' (no source given for this by Inskip): Inskip, 'Hamlet to County Borough', 6.

⁹⁴ Price, 'Industrial County Borough', 34.

⁹⁵ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 111.

⁹⁶ From 1902 to 1991 Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds, thereafter GKN plc. On its formation see Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 113.

⁹⁷ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 112.

⁹⁸ West Midland Group, 'Conurbation Study', 37–38; Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 114.

⁹⁹ Marshall and Mawson, 'West Midlands', 95; Spencer, 'Economy in Crisis', 219.

¹⁰⁰ Spencer, Taylor *et al.*, 'Industrial Heartland', 6.

¹⁰¹ West Midland Group, 'Conurbation Study', 123.

¹⁰² Peter Kennedy, *The Air Raids on Smethwick 1940–42* (Smethwick: Smethwick Local History Society, 1995), 21–23.

Smethwick peaked economically in the immediate postwar years, as the location for at least 47,000 jobs in 1951.¹⁰³ Metal engineering was particularly important, with rolling-stock, bicycles, and components for the new motor industry. Output also included soft drinks, cakes and many specialist trades.¹⁰⁴ Smethwick was notable within the conurbation for its concentration of large businesses, so although 328 firms employed more than five people in 1970, eleven with workforces of more than 1,000 accounted for 59 per cent of total Smethwick employment.¹⁰⁵ With some justification, the corporation speculated that it was 'probably the most heavily industrialised area in the whole of England'.¹⁰⁶ Although unemployment fluctuated in line with the national and regional economy, in the 1950s it averaged less than one per cent.¹⁰⁷ Labour shortages were a more serious issue.¹⁰⁸ Midland Red, for example, was affected by recruitment problems in the face of higher wages in car assembly plants.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰³ See Special Note 10: Employment data for Smethwick.

¹⁰⁴ Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, '*Industrial Heritage*', passim.

¹⁰⁵ Warley Corporation, 'Report of Survey: Employment and Industry', [council report], *Warley Structure Plan*, Smethwick: Warley Corporation, 1973, Table 24 firms by size of labour force; Table 25 total employees by size of firms. Twenty-one plants employed more than 500 workers in 1948: B. L. C. Johnson, 'The Distribution of Factory Population in the West Midlands Conurbation', *Transactions and Papers of the Institute of British Geographers*, (1958), 209–23, 216.

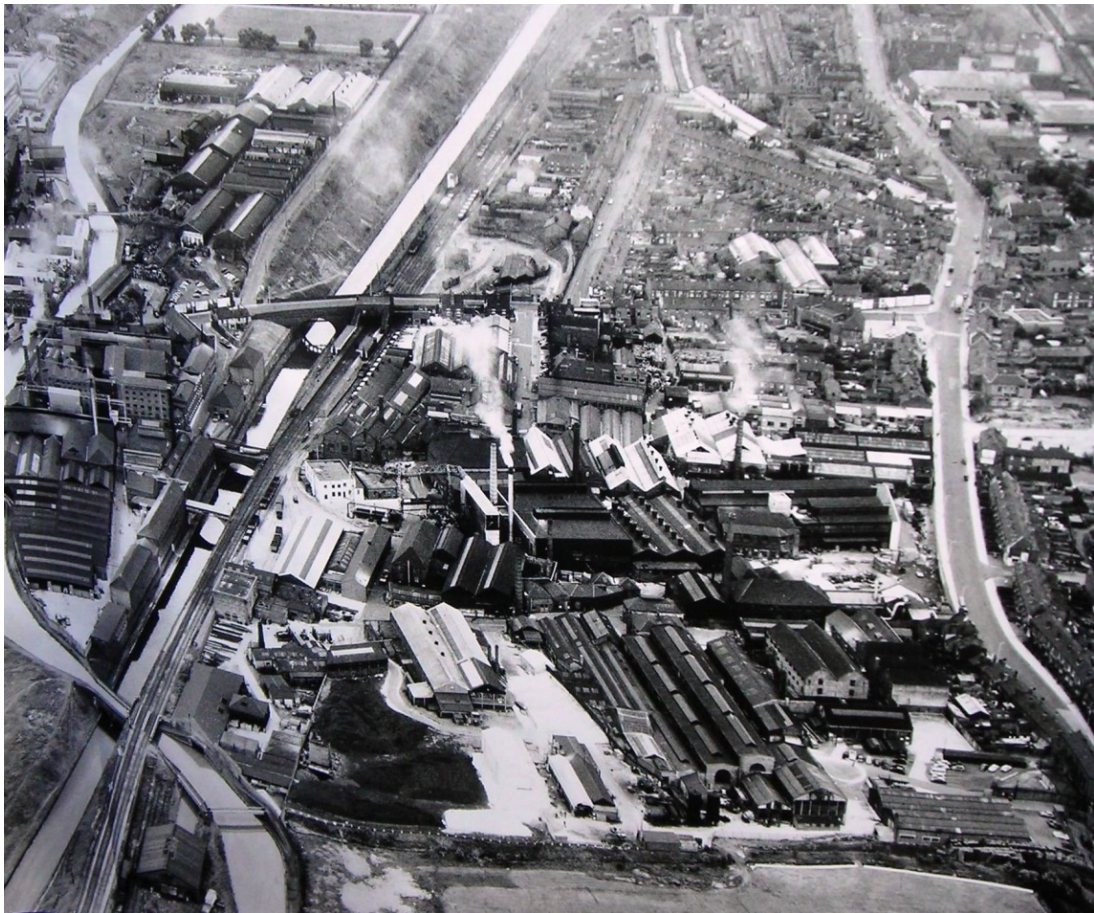
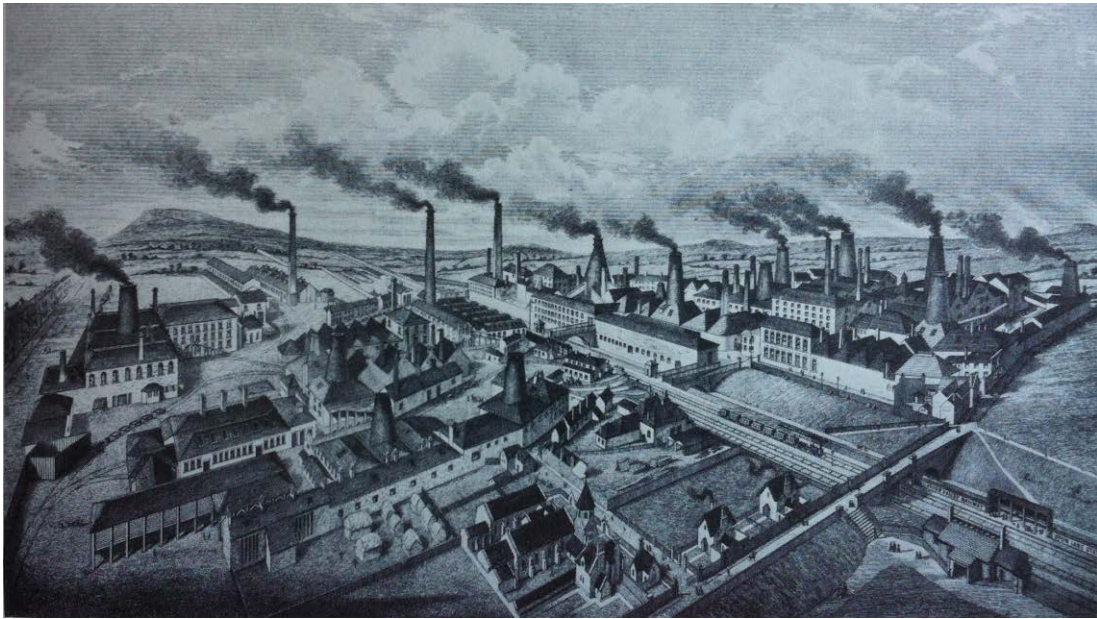
¹⁰⁶ Smethwick Corporation, 'Industrial Handbook (1959 edn.)', 54. In retrospective support for this statement see SN 9: 'Heavily industrialised' Smethwick.

¹⁰⁷ See Special Note 11: Unemployment data for Smethwick.

¹⁰⁸ Paul Foot, *Immigration and Race in British Politics* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), 11.

¹⁰⁹ Anderson, '*Midland Red*', 77, 80, 85, 94–5.

Figure 3.13: Chance's Glassworks, Smethwick, c.1851 and 1951



Source: Top—'Smethwick: Chance's glass-works in 1851', from G. C. Baugh *et. al.*, *A History of the County of Stafford*, 1976, Plate after 96. © Chance Family. Reproduced with permission of Sandwell Community Histories and Archives Service: Ian Gray, 7 March 2016. Bottom— 'Aerial view of Chance's Glassworks, c.1951', from Alan Taylor, *Taking Chances Project*, 2007. Reproduced with permission of Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust: Alan Taylor, 10 March 2007.

Between 1956 and 1963 there were several business closures in Smethwick, the largest being Birmingham Railway Carriage & Wagon (BRCW), a rolling-stock manufacturer.¹¹⁰ Another was ironworks Lones & Vernon, founded by the town's first mayor.¹¹¹ Aga Heat relocated its stove production to Telford, which shortly became a New Town.¹¹² In the decade to 1961, some 8,761 jobs went, a fall of 18.5 per cent.¹¹³ Workforce data for twenty-nine larger Smethwick manufacturers in 1949 remaining in 1962 showed all but five had reduced payrolls.¹¹⁴ Deindustrialisation was clearly underway in Smethwick during the 1950s, although this was not apparent at the time. Unemployment remained low, but the 1961 census showed that travel-to-work patterns increasingly extended into Birmingham, where employment had expanded since 1951.¹¹⁵

An important feature of deindustrialisation in Smethwick was the widespread external takeover of its businesses, leading to closure or departure.¹¹⁶ This reflected their underlying weakness from the 1950s.¹¹⁷ Pilkington took a stake in Chance's in 1936, completing its acquisition in 1955.¹¹⁸ It sold Chance's lighthouse division in 1956 and ended

¹¹⁰ John Hypher, Colin Wheeler, and Stephen Wheeler, *Birmingham Railway Carriage and Wagon Company: A century of achievement, 1855–1963* (Cheltenham: Runpast, 1995), 110.

¹¹¹ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 112.

¹¹² Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, '*Industrial Heritage*', 12.

¹¹³ Data from the census residence-workplace tables—see SN 10: Employment data.

¹¹⁴ Price, 'Industrial County Borough', Appendix II; Margaret B. Mann, 'Smethwick: A geographical study of land utilisation, 1800–1950', unpublished BA dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1950, Appendix II.

¹¹⁵ General Register Office, *Report on Usual Residence and Workplace: Census 1951 England and Wales* (London: HMSO, 1954), Table 5; General Register Office, *Workplace Tables: Census 1961 England and Wales* (London: HMSO, 1962), Table 1. Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016. Also SN 10: Employment data.

¹¹⁶ Among 39 postwar Smethwick firms profiled in a Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust study, some 28 were subject to takeover: Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, '*Industrial Heritage*', *passim*.

¹¹⁷ 'Interview: Millions of shares, but not many laughs: Jim Slater is proud of six things that might get him into heaven. Being chairman of Slater Walker is not among them', *Independent*, 15 December 1992.

¹¹⁸ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 116.

rolled plate-glass production in 1976, before the last 550 jobs went in 1981.¹¹⁹ Tube Investments (TI) acquired Phillips cycles by 1949 and dropped the Phillips brand for Raleigh after it took over the latter in 1960.¹²⁰ When TI moved away from steel and tube manufacture to consumer goods it closed the Smethwick plant in 1982.¹²¹ However, takeovers were also the method used by Smethwick firms such as GKN and Birmid to diversify from metal-related activities into new sectors and markets away from the declining West Midlands.¹²² Either way, the strategic consequence of takeovers was that key business decisions were decided outside Smethwick.¹²³ Henceforth, corporate governance might be transnational in scope, and willing to close unprofitable plant without regard to the impact on place.

The decisive period of takeovers in Smethwick was the mid-1960s, during the government-backed national merger boom.¹²⁴ Mitchells & Butlers merged with Bass in 1961 and Charrington in 1967 to create the UK's largest brewery with 11,000 outlets.¹²⁵ Its Cape Hill brewery was closed in 2002 following a DTI monopoly ruling.¹²⁶ Tangyes was

¹¹⁹ Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, '*Industrial Heritage*', 60; Ray Drury, 'A Personal History of Chance Brothers', *Chance Encounters*, 11, West Bromwich: The Public, Taking Chances Project, 2006; 'Chance's to close shock—Angry workers thought they had done enough', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 22 January 1981.

¹²⁰ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 114; Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, '*Industrial Heritage*', 107-8.

¹²¹ N. Flynn and A. Taylor, 'Inside the Rust Belt: An analysis of the Decline of the West Midlands Economy: Part 2—Corporate Strategies and Economic Change', *Environment and Planning A*, 18/8 (1986), 999–1028, 1004; Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, '*Industrial Heritage*', 107-8.

¹²² Flynn and Taylor, 'Corporate Strategies', 1022.

¹²³ This loss of economic independence had also been foreshadowed in the public sector, by the takeover of Smethwick Corporation's gas undertaking following nationalisation in 1948: Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 122.

¹²⁴ 'Problems that the take-over boom is introducing', *Financial Times*, 31 January 1968.

¹²⁵ 'Bass and Mitchells', *Financial Times*, 17 May 1961; 'Changing strategy as the brewers come together', *Financial Times*, 22 July 1967.

¹²⁶ The ruling by the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI) was in response to the sale by Bass buyers Interbrew to Coors in 2000: Harland and Davies, '*Mitchells & Butlers*', 80.

bought in 1966 by Central Wagon, the holding company that closed BRCW in 1963.¹²⁷ It was moved to Birmingham in 1969, after more than a century in Smethwick.¹²⁸ Scribbans-Kemp, a bakery employing 1,100 people in Corbett Street, acquired the Oliver and Gurden bakery in Oxford in 1959 and Birmingham-based Fullers-Kunzle in June 1968. In November 1968, Scribbans was itself bought by J. Lyons.¹²⁹ Cake production in Smethwick was run-down after 1973 and transferred to a new factory in South Yorkshire in 1977.¹³⁰ The merged but still family-run Crittall-Hope was acquired in 1968, with consequences described as ‘asset-stripping’ and ‘the unpleasant and unacceptable face of capitalism’.¹³¹ Nationalisation was also a factor: Midland Red became a subsidiary of the National Bus Company in 1968.¹³² The new owners shortly ended bus production in Bearwood and in 1973 closed the headquarters and garage.¹³³

¹²⁷ ‘£625,000 Central Wagon bid for Tangyes’, *Financial Times*, 17 June 1966; ‘Offer for Tangyes raised’, *Financial Times*, 8 July 1966. Hypher *et al* reported that ‘the new holding company developed new business interests in property development, hire purchase, property investment and industrial and merchant banking’. CWC had wound up the still-profitable BRCW and redeveloped the site for rented industrial space: Hypher, Wheeler *et al.*, ‘*Birmingham Railway Carriage and Wagon*’, 110.

¹²⁸ Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, ‘*Industrial Heritage*’, 155; Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, ‘Smethwick’, 112.

¹²⁹ J. Lyons & Co., ‘Scribbans-Kemp Group’, *An electronic history of J. Lyons & Co. and some of its 700 subsidiaries* [corporate website], <<http://www.kzwp.com/lyons/scribbans.htm>>, accessed 6 January 2015.

¹³⁰ ‘*Lyons bakery at Smethwick to close*’, Midlands News, 6 March 1975 [Television news broadcast], MACE: <<http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/atv-today-06031975-lyons-bakery-at-smethwick-to-close/MediaEntry/22781.html>> accessed 28 August 2014; Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, ‘*Industrial Heritage*’, 135.

¹³¹ See comments by Stan Newens MP about Slater Walker’s takeover of Crittall-Hope in a 1969 House of Commons debate on mergers and takeovers: UK Parliament, ‘Hansard HC’, [contains Parliamentary information licensed under the Open Parliament Licence v3.0], vol 779, col 852–940 7 March 1969. Slater Walker’s subsequent involvement in the Lonrho scandal was memorably condemned by Edward Heath: UK Parliament, ‘Hansard, HC’, [contains Parliamentary information licensed under the Open Parliament Licence v3.0], vol 856, col 1241–4 15 May 1973. The takeover of Crittall-Hope is examined in Special Note 12: Takeover of Hope’s and ‘the unpleasant and unacceptable face of capitalism’.

¹³² Anderson, ‘*Midland Red*’, 92.

¹³³ Anderson, ‘*Midland Red*’, 103, Appendix I.

A 'prime mover' in the West Midlands economy for more than a century, GKN employed 4,000 people in Smethwick in 1962.¹³⁴ It reduced its dependency on UK fasteners and steel stockholding after 1977, embarking on an aggressive programme of acquisitions to become a global engineering business.¹³⁵ It closed all its Smethwick plants in halving its UK workforce and moved its headquarters from Smethwick to Redditch.¹³⁶ A secondary factor in relocation may have been souring local political relations. Its legal action against West Midlands County Council followed a 60 per cent increase in its rates bill in 1978–81 (GKN made the first financial loss in its history in 1980).¹³⁷ Sandwell Council had also refused planning permission for a new computer centre at its recreational ground, a popular 'green lung' in Smethwick.¹³⁸

Birmid pursued growth through acquisition, combined with defensive measures to reduce costs and address endemically poor industrial relations.¹³⁹ In 1962, the three companies in the group employed 3,750 people in Smethwick.¹⁴⁰ It then took over businesses outside the West Midlands and internationally, before its merger in 1967 with

¹³⁴ Price, 'Industrial County Borough', Appendix II.

¹³⁵ The *Financial Times* described it as a strategy to 'outwit the decline of British manufacturing industry': 'Why GKN's appetite needs more time for digestion', *Financial Times*, 29 February 1980. Also see 'GKN and aerospace—word on a wing', *Economist*, 9 June 2012.

¹³⁶ 'Cheap imports forces GKN plant closures', *Financial Times*, 28 September 1978; 'GKN to close three plants and shed 2,000 Jobs', *Financial Times*, 28 June 1980; 'We want to work—GKN men bitter at plant closure news', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 11 September 1980; '1,000 jobs go as recession bites', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 11 December 1980; 'Jobs losses blamed on "Kamikaze" policy', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 8 October 1981; Flynn and Taylor, 'Corporate Strategies', 1007; GKN plc, 'Our heritage', [corporate website], <<http://www.gkn.com/aboutus/ourheritage/Pages/default.aspx>>, accessed 13 September 2012; WMEB Consultants, 'Redundancies and Jobs at Risk', [research report], *Labour Market Briefing*, Birmingham: West Midlands Enterprise Board, 1987, 5.

¹³⁷ 'GKN plans to battle over rate increase', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 27 August 1981.

¹³⁸ 'Council say no to GKN', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 12 March 1981.

¹³⁹ Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, 'Industrial Heritage', 28.

¹⁴⁰ Price, 'Industrial County Borough', Appendix II. The three Birmid companies were: Birmingham Aluminium Castings ('Birmal'); Midland Motor Cylinder ('Midcyl'); and Dartmouth Auto Castings ('Darcast'). 'Birmid' was an amalgam of Birmal and Midcyl.

Qualcast, a Derby-based foundry group.¹⁴¹ This helped moved it away from dependency on the motor industry towards the expanding market for garden equipment.¹⁴² In 1977, it was another 'prime mover' in the West Midlands economy.¹⁴³ It shortly halved its lossmaking foundry capacity, while boosting overall labour productivity.¹⁴⁴ In a bitterly-contested takeover in 1988, Blue Circle acquired Birmid-Qualcast.¹⁴⁵ Blue Circle only wanted Birmid's home products activities and the remaining Smethwick foundries were sold to Thyssen in Germany.¹⁴⁶ Its historic Dartmouth Road plants were closed by 1991, although the surviving Darcast Crankshafts remained in Smethwick.¹⁴⁷

Birmid was a symbol of industrial unrest in Britain in the 1960/70s. Frequent strikes – often through unofficial action by small groups of workers—caused mass layoffs at Birmid and the wider motor industry.¹⁴⁸ Birmid-Qualcast was the first referral to the Commission for Industrial Relations (CIR) set up by the Wilson government because of its strategic significance as a major auto-supplier: its Smethwick plants produced half of UK

¹⁴¹ 'Birmid-Qualcast £24m merger plan', *Financial Times*, 14 February 1967; 'Birmid Qualcast Limited', *Financial Times*, 21 December 1967.

¹⁴² Flynn and Taylor, 'Corporate Strategies', 1023.

¹⁴³ Flynn and Taylor, 'Corporate Strategies', 1000.

¹⁴⁴ 'Talks over threatened foundry', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 17 May 1979; 'Motor parts company axes 700 more jobs', *Financial Times*, 6 December 1980; '300 set to lose jobs', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 29 September 1979; 'Birmid men will fight redundancies', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 4 September 1980; 'More jobs to go at Birmid', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 11 September 1980; 'Foundries hammer home a grim message', *Financial Times*, 25 February 1983; Flynn and Taylor, 'Corporate Strategies', 1012.

¹⁴⁵ 'Blue Circle £217m bid for Birmid', *Financial Times*, 8 December 1987; 'Blue Circle revised bid spurned by Birmid', *Financial Times*, 28 January 1988; 'Birmid lives to fight another day', *Financial Times*, 20 February 1988; 'Birmid agrees £330m Blue Circle takeover', *Financial Times*, 18 October 1988.

¹⁴⁶ 'W. Germans stoke foundry fires', *Financial Times*, 2 March 1990.

¹⁴⁷ Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, 'Industrial Heritage', 28. Based at the former Tangyes site in Cornwall Road, former Birmid company Darcast described itself as a world leader in the manufacture of cast crankshafts: Darcast Crankshafts Ltd, 'About Us: Heritage—A company with a great history', [corporate website], <<http://www.darcast.com/heritage.html>>, accessed 13 September 2012.

¹⁴⁸ Twenty-five strikes at Birmid identified from TV news and newspaper coverage are listed in Special Note 13: Industrial Disputes at Birmid. Birmid closed a foundry in Middlemore Road, Smethwick in 1972 after reprieving another, blaming the 'unreliable history of industrial relations' at the plant: 'Birmid closing two foundries', *Financial Times*, 18 August 1972; "'Peace' saves foundry", *Financial Times*, 29 September 1972.

crankshafts.¹⁴⁹ The CIR recorded 100 disputes at Birmid's Smethwick foundries in 1969 alone, through inadequate company procedures and resources to avoid strike escalation. Inter-union rivalry and tense relations with the majority Asian workforce were further factors.¹⁵⁰

The disinvestment that followed takeovers led to workforce reductions from the late 1960s.¹⁵¹ Employment fell in 1977–81 from 37,500 to 21,700. This 42 per cent loss was the steepest fall of the six areas in Sandwell (Figure 3.14).¹⁵² This slump and a further recession in the early 1990s sparked the end of the major firms that had long signified Smethwick, with Avery the only exception at what it called its 'historic Birmingham site' in 2012 ().¹⁵³ Avery was nonetheless subject to a hostile takeover by GEC in 1979 and later sold to a US firm.¹⁵⁴ The closures were covered by the local paper in articles that powerfully conveyed

¹⁴⁹ 'CIR to receive its first three references', *Financial Times*, 16 May 1969; 'Foundries—Some rationalisation', *Financial Times*, 15 March 1971.

¹⁵⁰ 'Birmid to go ahead with CIR reform proposals', *Financial Times*, 22 January 1970; 'AEF denies charges of discrimination', *Financial Times*, 28 January 1970.

¹⁵¹ Warley Corporation, 'Employment and Industry', Table 9 employees in employment Warley: employment exchange areas 1960–70.

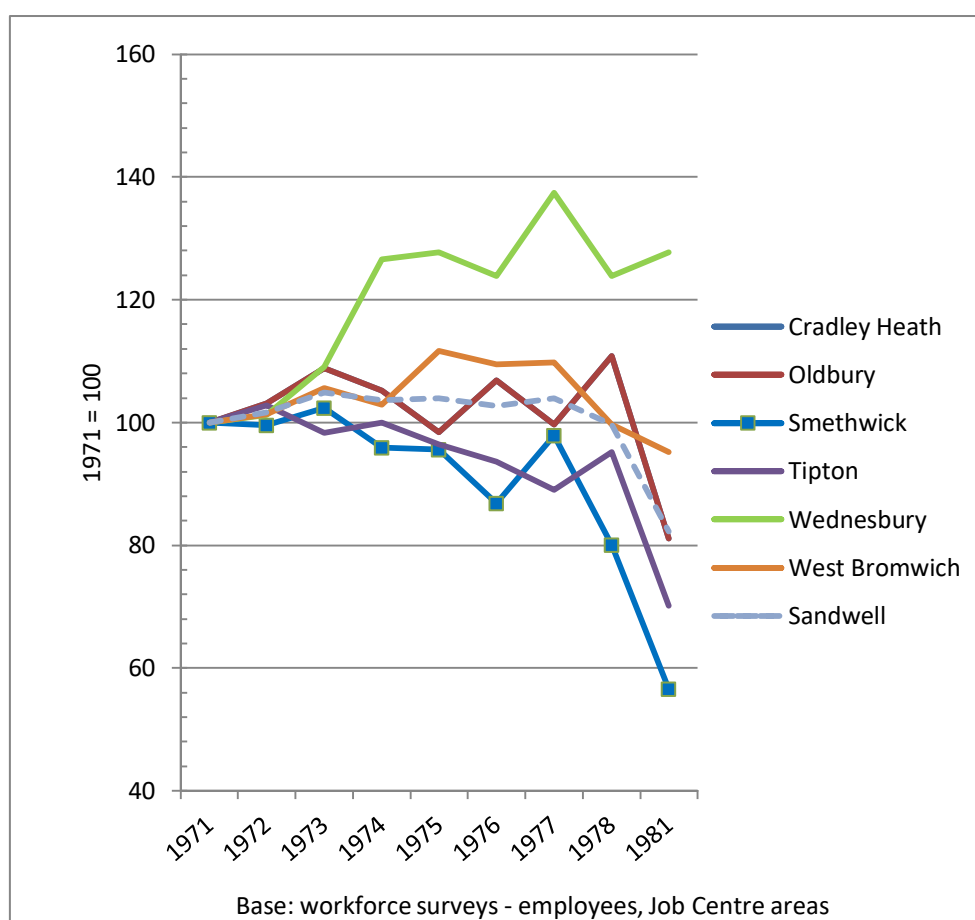
¹⁵² See SN 10: Employment data. The Warley Structure Plan had anticipated some 69,080 to 72,780 jobs as 'the most likely' level by 1986 compared to 84,000 in 1970 in the three Employment Exchange areas (EEAs) of Smethwick, Oldbury and Cradley Heath: Warley Corporation, 'Employment and Industry', Table 19 estimated employment demand 1970–86. The eventual employment level in the twelve southern Sandwell wards closely matching the historic Warley area in 1986 was c.54,000 (survey data showed 54,311 in 1984 and 53,147 in 1987): Office for National Statistics, 'Census of Employment: 1971–78, 1981–2, 1984, 1987 and 1989', [statistical report], <<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/default.asp>>, [contains data licensed by ONS under the Open Government Licence v3.0 and supplied through ONS primary user notice NTC/BRES13-P0567 via NOMIS official labour market statistics], accessed 10 February 2015.

¹⁵³ Avery Weigh-Tronix, 'About Us', [corporate website], <<http://www.averyweigh-tronix.com/uk/aboutus/>>, accessed 13 September 2012. Note: For reasons of space, information on the sources for Figure 3.15 is provided here. Workforce data is from Mann, 'Land Utilisation', Appendix I; Price, 'Industrial County Borough', Appendix I. Company sites derived from '*National Grid 1:1250—1st Edition*', [TIFF geospatial data], Scale 1:1250, published 1956–60 [Updated 30 November 2010], © Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group database rights 2016, EDINA Historic Digimap Service, <<http://digimap.edina.ac.uk>>, downloaded 7 August 2014.

¹⁵⁴ 'Scales tip in favour of GEC—Bitter blow to workers', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 29 November 1979; Avery Weigh-Tronix, 'About Us'. The General Electric Company, or GEC, was a major UK-based industrial conglomerate, having acquired Associated Electrical Industries (AEI) in 1967, and merged with English Electric the following year.

the sense of crisis.¹⁵⁵ In a reported comment, 'Birmid was Smethwick. It was an institution. People thought it would go on for ever. And now unbelievably it has gone'.¹⁵⁶ 'Father-and-son' job recruitment and company social benefits disappeared with these departures.¹⁵⁷ Harris recalled 'not being able to see how Smethwick could really answer that; could rise to it'.¹⁵⁸

Figure 3.14: Indexed Employment change, Sandwell area Job Centres, 1971–81



Source: Special Note 10: Employment data for Smethwick. Adapted data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0 and supplied through ONS primary user notice NTC/BRES13-P0567. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

¹⁵⁵ 'The grim face of local industry', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 29 October 1981; 'A sad story of decline', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 29 October 1981; 'Commons praise for jobs report', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 10 December 1981.

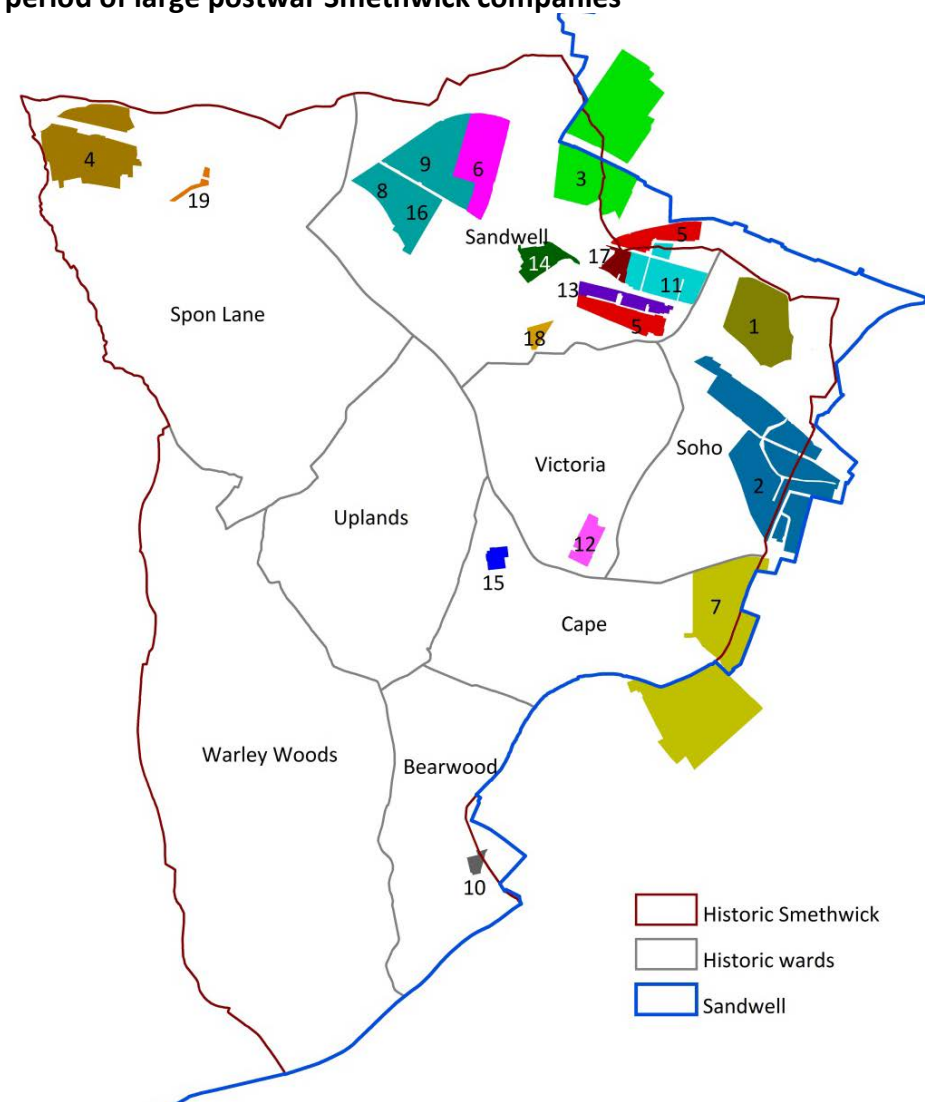
¹⁵⁶ 'Cuts bite deep at Birmid Qualcast's foundries', *Financial Times*, 20 May 1981.

¹⁵⁷ David Hallam, 'Interview with Author', 11 June 2013. Hallam was a Sandwell Labour councillor for Victoria ward from 1976–79.

¹⁵⁸ Harris, 'Interview'.

Figure 3.15: Location and historic operating period of large postwar Smethwick companies

Company	Peak reported size		Operating period	Map code
	Workforce	Year		
W. & T. Avery	4,618	1949	1895–present	1
Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds (GKN)	4,205	1949	1855–1985	2
Birmingham Railway Carriage & Wagon	3,224	1949	1864–1963	3
Chance Bros.	2,888	1949	1824–1981	4
J. A. Phillips/Raleigh	2,832	1949	1908–1982	5
Henry Hope & Son	2,030	1949	1905–c.1991	6
Mitchells & Butlers (M&B)	1,970	1962	1879–2002	7
Midland Motor Cylinder (Birmid)	1,816	1949	1920–c.1991	8
Birmingham Aluminium Casting (Birmid)	1,529	1949	1920–c.1991	9
Birmingham & Midland Motor Omnibus (Midland Red)	1,224	1949	1914–1973	10
Tangyes	1,125	1949	1855–1969	11
Scribbans-Kemp	1,100	1962	1905–1977	12
Allen Everitt/Imperial Chemical Industries	996	1949	1889–c.1971	13
Evered	805	1949	1866–2005	14
British Pens	762	1949	1909–1985	15
Dartmouth Auto Castings (Birmid)	687	1949	1933–c.1991	16
Incandescent Heat	585	1949	1930–c.1988	17
Smethwick Drop Forgings	550	1962	1930–1980	18
United Spring	500	1962	1909–c.1969	19



Source: Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A Landmark Information Group Ltd/EDINA product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153. Sources provided at footnote 153. Also see Special Note 10: Employment data for Smethwick.

The Smethwick unemployment register, which stood at just 92 people in June 1966, gradually increased to 2,162 by 1979.¹⁵⁹ It then rose by an average of 135 per month to reach 7,021 by 1982 (Figure 3.16). On the census measure, the unemployment rate across the Smethwick area was 16.6 per cent in 1981 and 15.9 per cent in 1991 (Figure 3.17). After a fresh peak in 1993, unemployment gradually fell to a low of 1,668 in 2004. It nearly doubled in the period after the credit crunch before falling again to 2,202 by 2014.¹⁶⁰ The consequence of deindustrialisation was the long-term decline in the male employment rate in Smethwick, from 90 per cent in 1951 to 60.3 per cent in 1981 and 58.7 per cent in 2011.¹⁶¹

Employment in Smethwick recovered slightly between 1995 and 2008. The jobs count then dropped to a new low of 18,200 in 2011, followed by a small recovery (Figure 3.19).¹⁶² This represented a cumulative decline in the sixty years after 1951, depending on the measure used, of between 26,985 and 39,300 jobs in Smethwick, or 57 to 68 per cent).¹⁶³ Deindustrialisation may not be an exhausted process and Smethwick retained some flourishing firms.¹⁶⁴ In 2014, manufacturing employment still accounted for nearly a quarter (24 per cent) of jobs in Smethwick; double the regional average.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁹ See SN 11: Unemployment data. Also this illustrative front page story, which reported an unemployment rate of 0.3 per cent: 'A job for everyone—Booming Smethwick has only 159 unemployed', *Smethwick Telephone and Warley Courier*, 23 December 1964.

¹⁶⁰ SN 10: Employment data.

¹⁶¹ SN 7: Salford data.

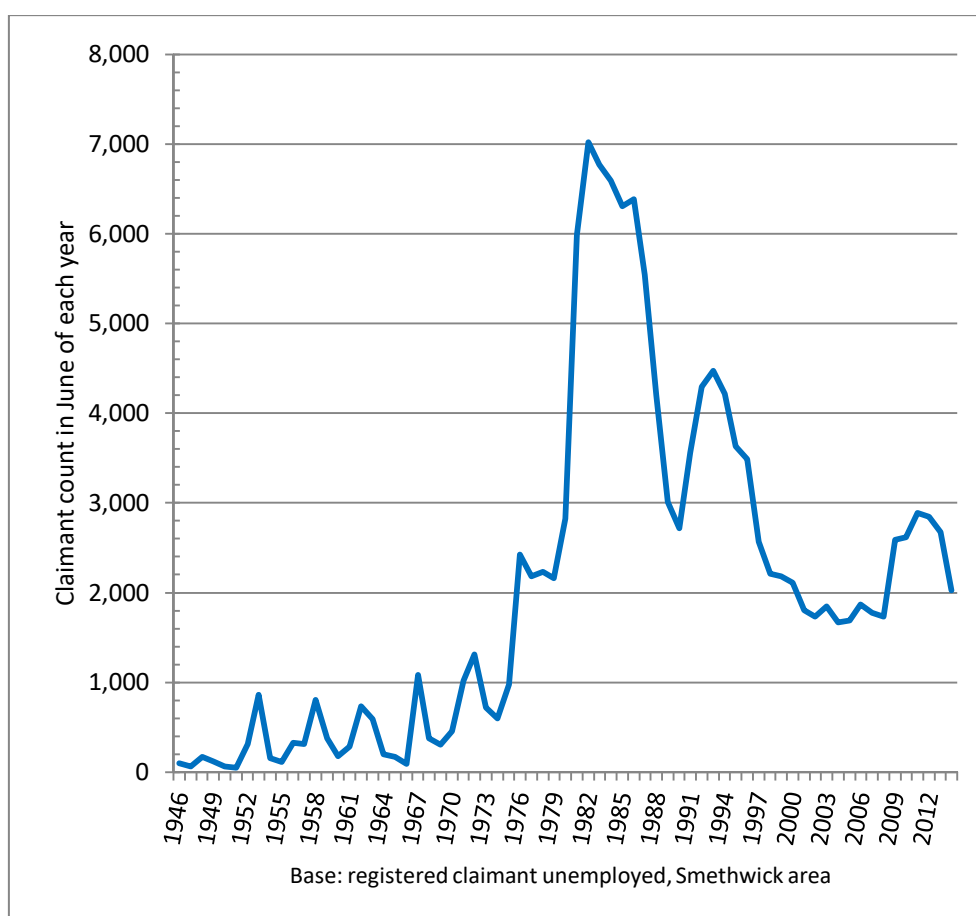
¹⁶² SN 10: Employment data.

¹⁶³ The 2011 census suggested a workforce in Smethwick of 20,366 in 2011. This represents a reduction of 26,985 jobs since 1951, a fall of 57 per cent. The 39,300 reduction compares the 2011 BRES survey (rounded to the nearest hundred) with the 57,504 in 1951 cited in Smethwick Corporation, 'The Survey and Written Analysis', [council report], *County Borough of Smethwick Development Plan*, Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1951. Adapted census and BRES data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0 and supplied through ONS primary user notice NTC/BRES13-P0567. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016. Also see SN 10: Employment data.

¹⁶⁴ See Special Note 14: Smethwick Manufacturing in 2015.

¹⁶⁵ SN 10: Employment data.

Figure 3.16: Unemployment in Smethwick area, 1946 to 2014



Source: Special Note 11: Unemployment data for Smethwick. Adapted data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

Salford initially suffered a similar process to Smethwick (Figure 3.18). Affected by postwar changes in cargo handling (containerisation) requiring larger ships, Manchester Docks entered into decline.¹⁶⁶ Port-related activity provided 3,500 jobs in Salford in 1971, but the docks closed in 1982.¹⁶⁷ As in Smethwick, company takeovers eliminated employment at nearby Trafford Park.¹⁶⁸ The simultaneous collapse of industry in East

¹⁶⁶ Alan Kidd, 'Manchester: A brief economic history', [academic study], *Manchester/Liverpool II*, Berlin: Philipp Oswald, 2004, 62.

¹⁶⁷ See SN 10: Employment data. For Salford: SN 7: Salford data. Also see Jeremy Myerson, *Making the Lowry* (Salford: Lowry Press, 2000), 12.

¹⁶⁸ Lloyd, 'Manchester', 57-58. Rodgers, 'Manchester Revisited', 34.

Manchester created a six-mile zone of dereliction through the two city centres.¹⁶⁹

Smethwick was likewise located in a declining corridor stretching from central Birmingham through the Black Country, described by Nevin as a 'shatter-zone'.¹⁷⁰ This culminated in levels of household poverty above 30 per cent in Smethwick by 1991, in stark contrast with 20 years earlier (Figure 3.19 and Figure 3.20).¹⁷¹

The difference was that by 1971, manufacturing accounted for only 35 per cent of jobs in Salford, compared to 77 per cent in Smethwick. Salford had a separate vulnerability in its docks, as noted. But a quarter (26 per cent) of employment was in financial, scientific and professional services, with a strong base in medicine and dentistry.¹⁷² Unlike Smethwick it had a university. Salford was also adjacent to the Manchester central business district (CBD), leaving it well-placed to benefit from post-industrial economic forces. It gained significantly from regeneration of the docks as Salford Quays (Chapter 4). Figure 3.21 shows the stark divergence after 1991, leaving employment in historic Salford 25 per cent higher in 2014 than in 1971, but 49 per cent lower in Smethwick. It also shows the underperformance of the wider Birmingham-Sandwell economy compared to Manchester-Salford.

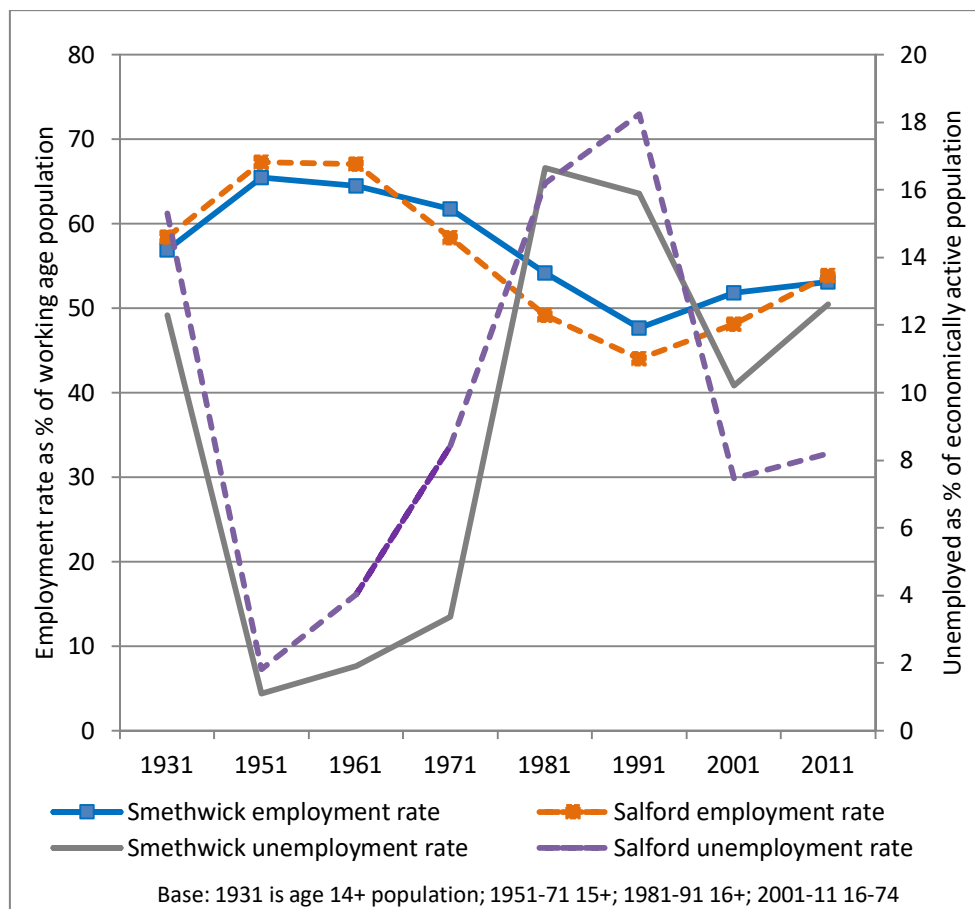
¹⁶⁹ Brendan Nevin, 'The Drivers of Change in the Manchester-Salford Housing Market: A review of the evidence and policy implications', [consultancy report], Birmingham: ECORYS UK, 2005, 4. Also see Janet M. Speake, 'East Manchester: A study of inner-city industrial decline and regeneration', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Keele, 1992, 649.

¹⁷⁰ Nevin defined this as a 'mixed-use zone which has experienced large-scale changes in demand and subsequent dereliction and under-use, marked by arterial transport routes which make it difficult to recreate a legible urban form without major public investment: Brendan Nevin, 'Economic decline in the Birmingham-Black Country conurbation', [personal communication to author], 14 January 2008. This shatter-zone is essentially the 14-mile corridor memorably captured in sixty pictures in camera film roll format and travelogue in the *Conurbation Study*: 'Through the carriage window: from Birmingham to Wolverhampton by rail', West Midland Group, 'Conurbation Study', 100-3.

¹⁷¹ Dorling, Rigby *et al.*, 'Poverty, Wealth and Place'—see Special Note 15: Poverty in Sandwell and Birmingham, 1971 and 1991. The position since 1991 is shown in Chapter 6.

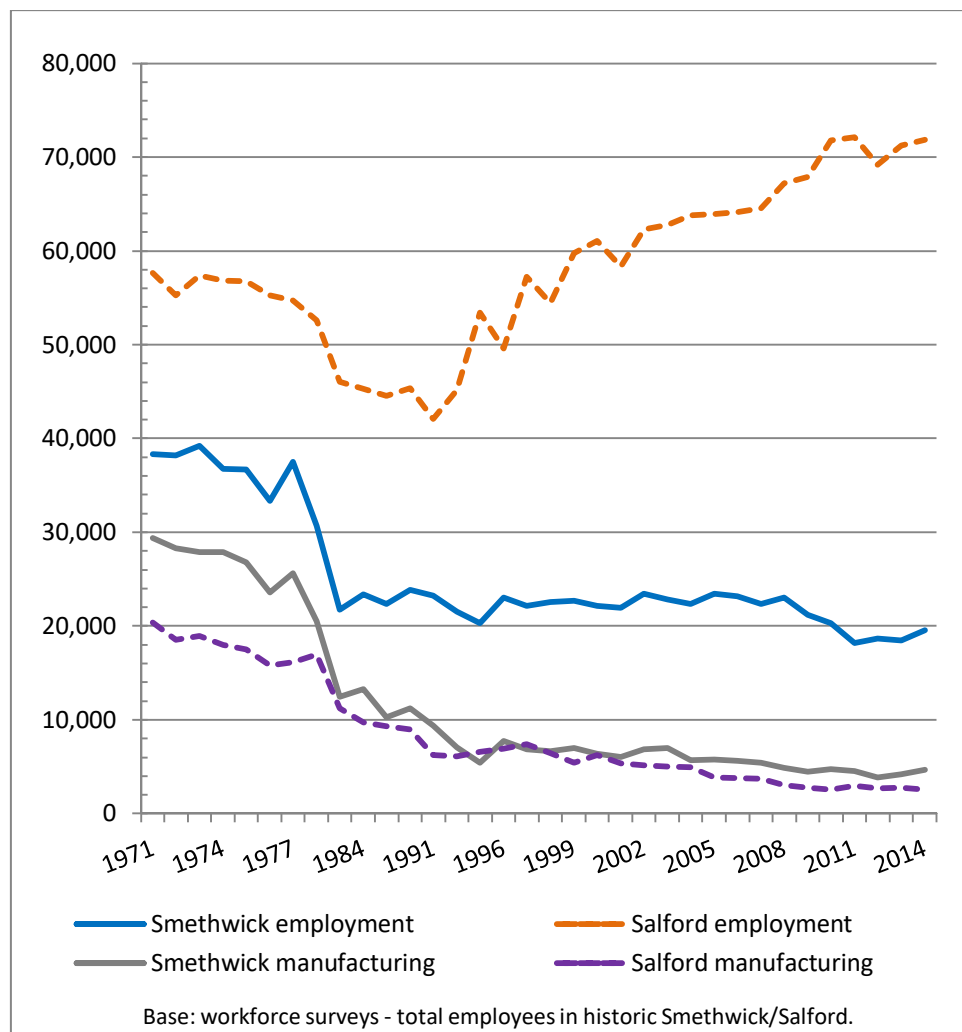
¹⁷² SN 7: Salford data.

Figure 3.17: Economic Activity in historic Smethwick and Salford, 1931 to 2011



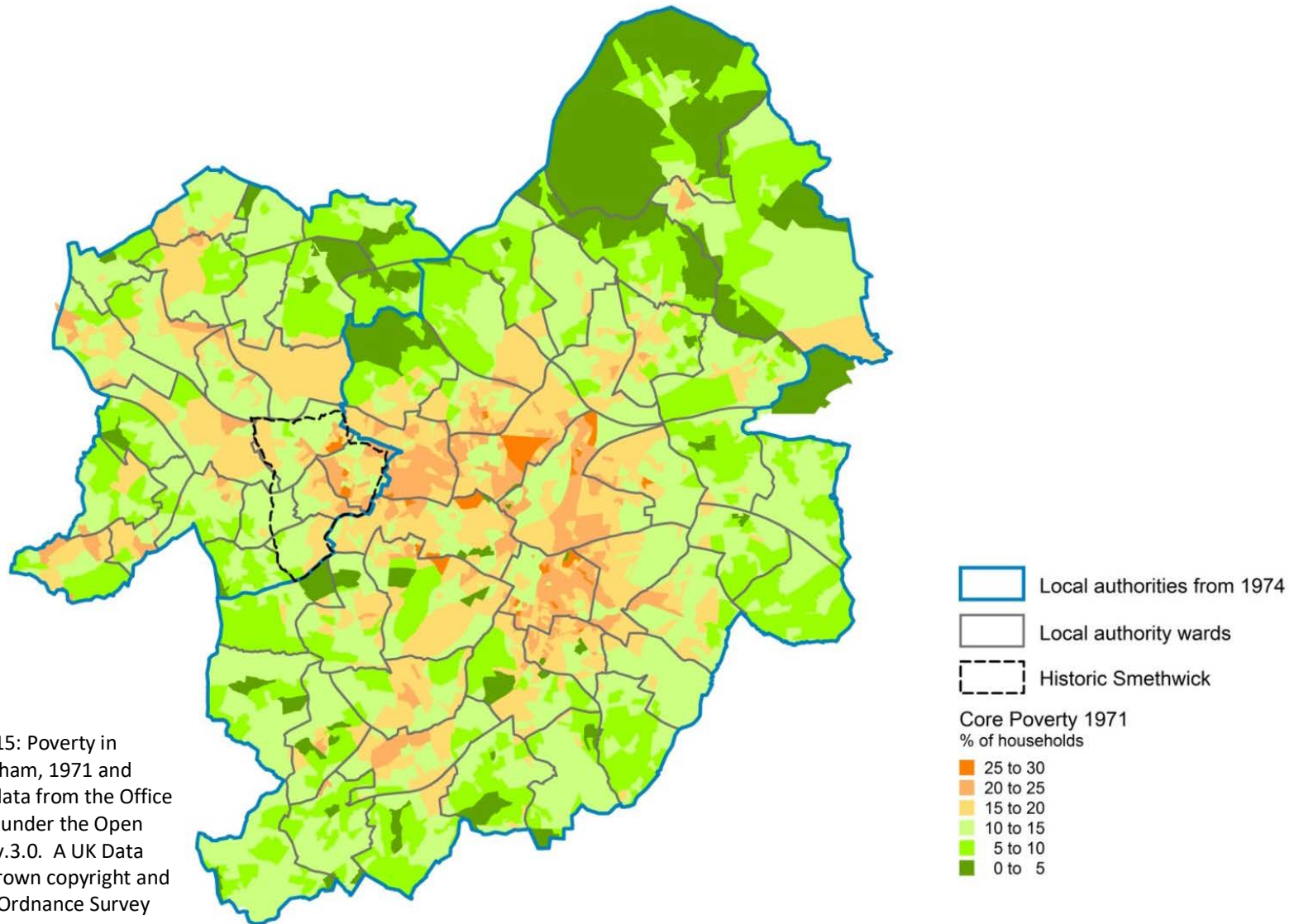
Source: Special Note 7: Comparative data for historic Salford. Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

Figure 3.18: Jobs count in Historic Smethwick and Salford, 1971 to 2014



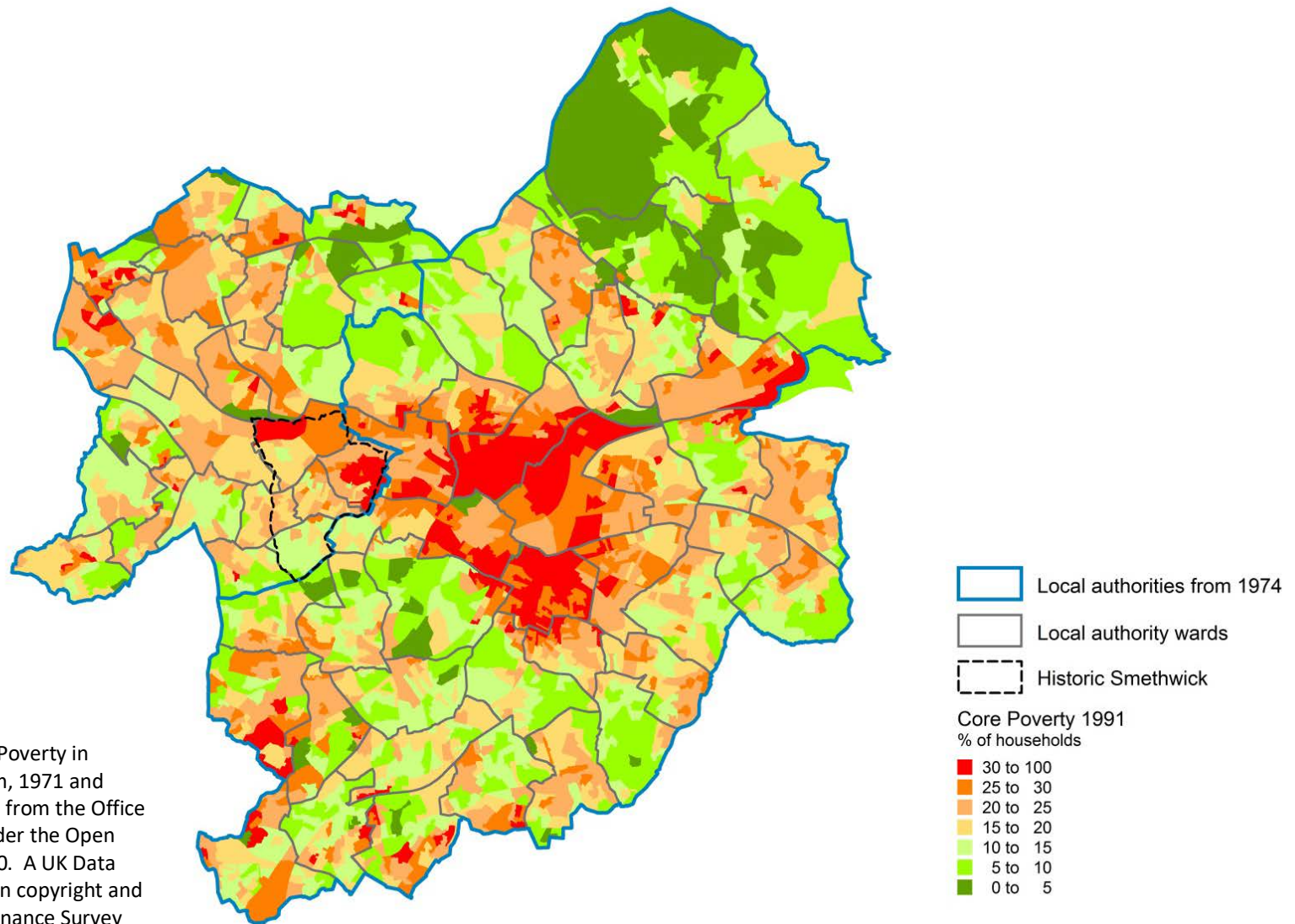
Source: Special Note 7: Comparative data for historic Salford. Adapted data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0 and supplied through ONS primary user notice NTC/BRES13-P0567. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

Figure 3.19: Deprivation in Birmingham and Sandwell, 1971



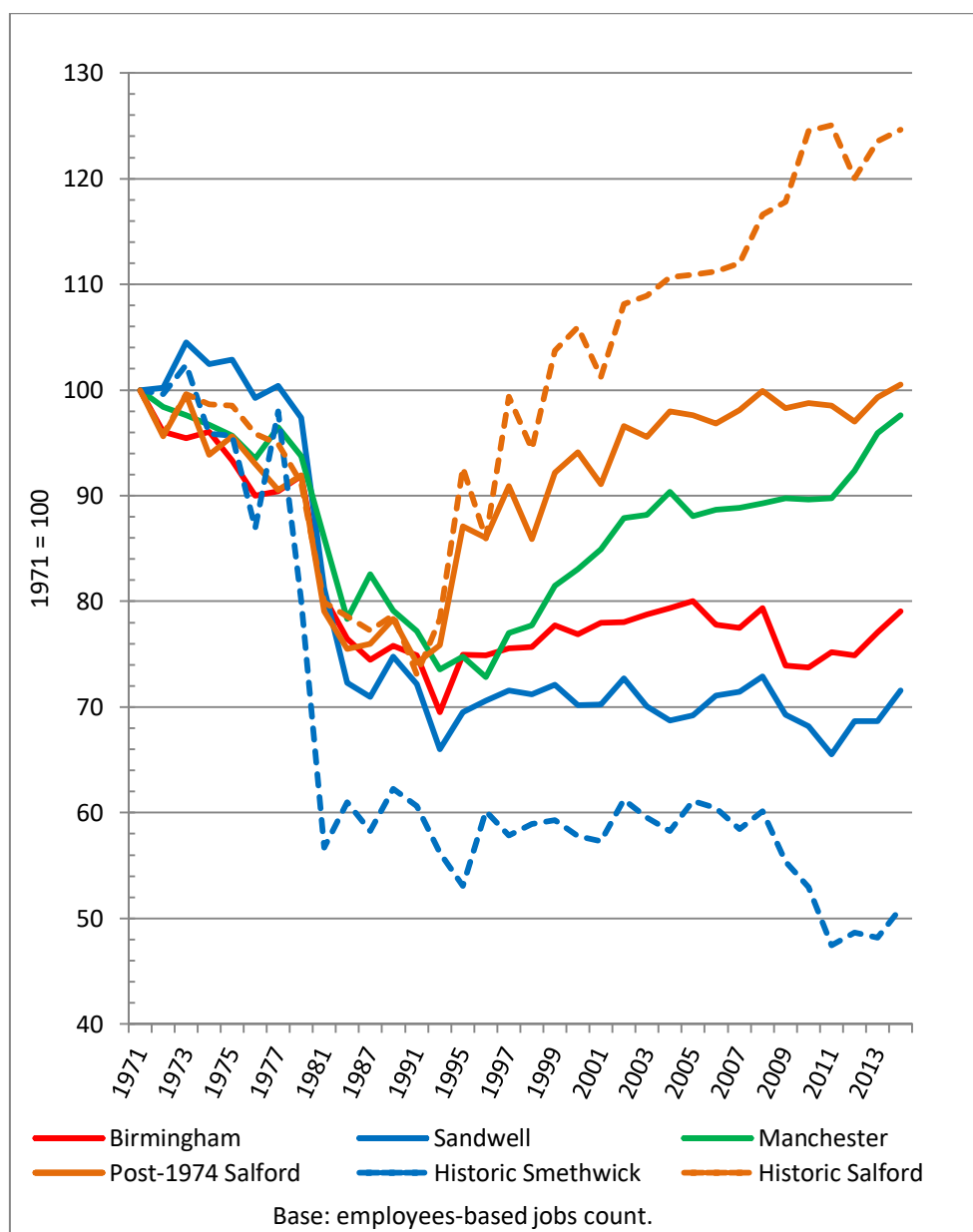
Source: Special Note 15: Poverty in Sandwell and Birmingham, 1971 and 1991. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A UK Data Service product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

Figure 3.20: Deprivation in Birmingham and Sandwell, 1991



Source: Special Note 15: Poverty in Sandwell and Birmingham, 1971 and 1991. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A UK Data Service product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

Figure 3.21: Indexed jobs change in Smethwick, Salford, Birmingham and Manchester, 1971 to 2014



Source: Special Note 7: Comparative data for historic Salford. Adapted data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0 and supplied through ONS primary user notice NTC/BRES13-P0567. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

To conclude this section, deindustrialisation cost Smethwick three-fifths of its jobs, leaving a shatter-zone of dereliction and under-use, and acute deprivation. Firms like GKN chose to leave after a century or more in Smethwick; others were rundown and closed by new, remote owners following takeover. Smethwick reflected the wider decline of

manufacturing in the UK. Factors included underinvestment, poor management and industrial strife, which plagued Birmid; a pivotal firm in the motor industry, Smethwick's largest employer and significant for attracting early immigrant labour. It thereby lost its basis and unlike Salford, economic decline appeared ongoing in 2015.

3.3 Immigration: Community interaction, diversity and sustainability

By 2011, Smethwick had a majority Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population. For a place once described as a 'colour-bar town' and 'race-troubled Smethwick', it was a significant development.¹⁷³ As Josan put it: 'Smethwick has gained from its diversity, which has been the basis of its sustainability'.¹⁷⁴ This section explores this transformation, which reflected wider compositional shifts in major cities occurring alongside deindustrialisation and urban decline, eventually creating 'super-diverse' environments and identities in the twenty-first century.¹⁷⁵

Postwar population decline in the major conurbations was the net result of complex inward and outward movements. Sustained inflow by BME groups occurred in central areas emptied by indigenous white populations.¹⁷⁶ Immigration arose through the 'pull' of UK labour shortages in the 1950s and the 'push' of limited home opportunity in New

¹⁷³ 'Colour Bar Town Gets a Temple', *Daily Mail*, 31 July 1961; 'Minister in new Smethwick row', *Daily Mail*, 9 April 1965.

¹⁷⁴ Gurinder Singh Josan, 'Interview with Author', 3 July 2013. Josan was a Sandwell Labour councillor for St Pauls ward in Smethwick from 2002-10.

¹⁷⁵ See Special Note 16: Ethnicity, Super-Diversity, Cohesion and Integration.

¹⁷⁶ Ward, 'Planning Impacts', 271; Herbert, 'Towns and Cities', 204; Focus Housing Group, 'Black and Minority Ethnic Groups: Patterns of settlement', [research study], Birmingham: Focus Housing Group: Community Regeneration Unit, 1996, 17; Malcolm Dick, 'Travelling through Time: Migration and the Black experience', in Ian Grosvenor, Rita Mclean *et al.* (eds.), *Making Connections* (Birmingham: Black Past Birmingham Futures Group, 2002), 38-9.

Commonwealth countries, until restricted by legislation in 1962–71.¹⁷⁷ Dispersal from original areas of settlement to mainly suburban housing has been a continuous process, particularly for some BME groups.¹⁷⁸ Later refugees and migration from new European Union countries accounted for 55 per cent of UK population growth in the decade to 2011, stimulating the ‘reurbanisation’ of cities and conurbations.¹⁷⁹ London in particular, but other areas of major cities became ‘super-diverse’.¹⁸⁰ Kidd encapsulated the historical shift generated by immigration in referring to contemporary Manchester as ‘more “globalised” than “globalising”’.¹⁸¹ Where immigration was less, in areas like Salford and Liverpool, the urban population loss was much greater.¹⁸²

Institutional and cultural barriers affecting BME groups operated in housing and job markets.¹⁸³ Black families applying for suburban council housing in Birmingham in the 1960s faced a discriminatory qualifying time before being able to register on the waiting list.¹⁸⁴ In the 1970s, they were found to be disproportionately housed in flats or maisonettes in the middle and outer rings of Birmingham (this was also the case for Windmill Lane in Smethwick).¹⁸⁵ Discrimination by estate agents and lenders also restricted

¹⁷⁷ Herbert, 'Towns and Cities', 204; Asif Afridi and Joy Warmington, 'The Pied Piper: The BME third sector and UK race relations policy', [academic study], Birmingham: Brap, 2009, 32-4.

¹⁷⁸ Mark Clapson, 'The Suburban Aspiration in England since 1919', *Contemporary British History*, 14/1 (2000), 151–74, 165-6. Also see 'Measuring diversity—The London effect', *Economist*, 15 December 2012.

¹⁷⁹ The BME population consequently rose from nine to fourteen per cent of the total in England and Wales in 2001-11: 'Ethnic minorities—Into the melting pot', *Economist*, 8 February 2014. On reurbanisation see Tony Champion, 'People in Cities—The numbers', [government report], *Foresight Future of Cities Working Paper*, London: Government Office for Science, 2015, 15.

¹⁸⁰ 'The Census and diversity—Britain's amazing technicolour dreamcoat', *Economist*, 11 December 2012. Also see SN 16: Ethnicity.

¹⁸¹ Kidd, 'Manchester', 65.

¹⁸² Ward, 'Planning Impacts', 271.

¹⁸³ Clapson, 'Suburban Aspiration', 160.

¹⁸⁴ John Rex and Robert Moore, *Race, Community, and Conflict: A study of Sparkbrook* (Oxford: Institute of Race Relations, 1967), 24-7.

¹⁸⁵ Clapson, 'Suburban Aspiration', 163-4.

Black and Asian entry into private suburban housing markets in UK cities.¹⁸⁶ BME communities were also affected disproportionately by the collapse of inner-city employment through deindustrialisation. Persistent economic barriers and community-police tensions provided a race dimension to urban disturbances, notably in 1981.¹⁸⁷ The resulting Scarman Report referred to racial disadvantage as 'a fact of current British life [. . .] and a significant factor in the causation of the Brixton disorders'.¹⁸⁸

Immigration to Smethwick was not confined to the postwar period. The *Victoria County History* referred to the recruitment by Chance's of French and Belgian workers to enable the production of sheet glass from 1832 and living in factory houses until at least 1862.¹⁸⁹ The first recorded refugees in Smethwick were also Belgians during the First World War.¹⁹⁰ However, Prem recorded only two Indian households in Smethwick in 1942, when there were perhaps a hundred living in Birmingham.¹⁹¹ Immigrants were recruited from the Punjab in 1942 by Birmid, who needed skilled metal workers to complete War Office contracts.¹⁹² In the late 1950s, they were joined by men from Mirpur and in the 1960s, from Sylhet to form the bulk of Birmid's workforce.¹⁹³ Smethwick attracted immigration in the postwar years because of plentiful employment opportunities and accessible older private

¹⁸⁶ Clapson, 'Suburban Aspiration', 164-5.

¹⁸⁷ Herbert, 'Towns and Cities', 206.

¹⁸⁸ Quoted in Afridi and Warmington, 'Pied Piper', 28.

¹⁸⁹ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 88, 115.

¹⁹⁰ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 106.

¹⁹¹ Dhani R. Prem, *The Parliamentary Leper: A history of colour prejudice in Britain* (Aligarh: Metric, 1965), 6; Sutcliffe and Smith, '*Birmingham 1939-1970*', 363.

¹⁹² Mary Bodfish, 'Smethwick History Enquiry', [personal communication to author], 14 January 2005.

¹⁹³ Izzy Mohammed, *From Bangladesh to Smethwick* (Smethwick: Smethwick Bangladeshi Youth Forum, 2008), 69; Mark Duffield, 'Rationalisation and the Politics of Segregation: Indian workers in Britain's foundry industry 1945-62', in Kenneth Lunn (ed.), *Race and Labour in Twentieth Century Britain* (London: Frank Cass, 1985), 162. Sylhet is an area of Bangladesh with a dialect distinct from Bengali, the national language. Until independence in 1971, Bangladesh was part of Pakistan, albeit physically separated by India. Mirpur is a district of Azad Kashmir in Pakistan with a dialect derived from Punjabi.

housing, but also because of its proximity to Birmingham, like Manchester a global city since at least the eighteenth century.¹⁹⁴

As Birmid showed, the first immigrants were mainly men, often seeking to earn money to buy land back home.¹⁹⁵ They lodged where they could, Foot citing 3,200 people living in 400 multi-occupied houses in Smethwick around 1962.¹⁹⁶ Their families followed when they bought accommodation or when immigration controls allowed, and this was not an easy process.¹⁹⁷ Working conditions in Smethwick foundries and backstreet sweatshops were very poor, with instances of Asians paid less than their white counterparts.¹⁹⁸ Outside the workplace, BME populations faced discrimination through the 'colour-bar' in pubs, clubs and shops, which started in Smethwick in 1955 at the Red Cow pub and persisted, illegally, into the 1970s.¹⁹⁹

Marshall Street in Smethwick illustrated population shift and social change, a case of 'discursive and practical intersections of social relations that become localised in specific places at particular times'.²⁰⁰ It was amplified by the notoriety of the council's attempted

¹⁹⁴ Malcolm Dick and Rajinder Dudrah, 'Introduction: Ethnic community histories in the Midlands', *Midland History*, 36/2 (2011), 143–8, <<http://www.maneyonline.com/doi/abs/10.1179/004772911X13074595848870>>, accessed 15 December 2014, 145.

¹⁹⁵ Dick, 'Migration and the Black experience', 37.

¹⁹⁶ Foot, 'Immigration and Race', 16.

¹⁹⁷ Mohammed, 'Bangladesh to Smethwick', 57–9.

¹⁹⁸ 'Don't Pay Bribes for Jobs, Coloured Workers Warned', *Daily Mail*, 1 October 1963; 'Malcolm X in the Black Country', *Independent*, 3 March 1993. See the case of Talib Hussain and Reeve Polishing and Plating Ltd in Derek Bishton, *The Sweat Shop Report* (Birmingham: AFFOR, 1984), 37–43.

¹⁹⁹ Foot, 'Immigration and Race', 57; 'Colour bar at Smethwick', *Midlands News*, 24 July 1961 [Television news broadcast], MACE: <<http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-24071961-colour-bar-at-smethwick/MediaEntry/4560.html>> accessed 28 August 2014; 'The way out for a man at the barber's', *Daily Mail*, 19 November 1964; 'Students picket pub in "colour bar" protest', *News Telephone*, 20 February 1975; Harris, 'Interview'.

²⁰⁰ M. P. Smith, *Transnational Urbanism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 98, cited in David Parker and Paul Long, 'Reimagining Birmingham: Public history, selective memory and the narration of urban change', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 6/2 (2003), 157–78, 159.

policy response and the visit by Malcolm X in 1965, which was commemorated by a blue heritage plaque in 2012 (Chapter 4).²⁰¹ A 'respectable white working-class neighbourhood', it may have represented a mid-point of the Smethwick experience between places like Bearwood and Soho. Severn recalled the intensity of proximity; the strong knowledge of neighbours and characters in the street and what they did; and the expected standards of behaviour.²⁰²

Severn saw the process of change in Marshall Street, with a few Caribbean families moving in, including next door. 'But the real change for my parents was when it became an Asian street'.²⁰³ The BME population was perhaps five per cent in 1960, thirty per cent in 1965 and fifty per cent in 1971 so that Marshall Street was one of a number of predominantly BME localities in Smethwick by 1971.²⁰⁴ Scare stories by a particular Conservative councillor fuelled the local concern.²⁰⁵ The Marshall Street furore broke in late 1964, attracting national press and TV coverage, including interviews with white and BME residents. In one, a white woman said, 'During the last two years Marshall Street has

²⁰¹ 'Malcolm X', Midlands News, 12 February 1965 [Television news broadcast], MACE: <<http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-12021965-malcolm-x/MediaEntry/1542.html>> accessed 28 August 2014; 'Plaque to honour Malcolm X visit to Smethwick in 1965', *BBC News: Birmingham and the Black Country* [Local news website], (updated 21 February 2012) <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-17102185>>, accessed 8 January 2015. Also see Special Note 46: Smethwick as a 'significant and surprising place'.

²⁰² Alun Severn, 'Interview with Author', 29 January 2013. Severn was a social enterprise consultant who grew up in Marshall Street.

²⁰³ Severn, 'Interview'.

²⁰⁴ National coverage from the *Daily Mail* for 1965–65 refers to 50 out of 100 houses, or half the population being 'coloured': 'White list clash', *Daily Mail*, 7 December 1964. The local sources suggested a more likely figure of some 26 of 91 or 30 per cent BME by 1965: 'Controversy house—I don't care who buys, says owner', *Smethwick Telephone & Weekly Courier*, 11 January 1965. Also see SN 17: Marshall Street and West Smethwick.

²⁰⁵ 'Smethwick widow "terrorised" says Tory', *Daily Mail*, 7 January 1965. Also see Foot, 'Immigration and Race', 43–4.

completely fallen apart'. She felt 'outnumbered', believing that thirteen houses would be going up for sale shortly, with 'only coloured people who will buy them'.²⁰⁶

Reflecting on the roots of racism, Severn suggested that 'tolerance is a learned skill'. He wondered if it is fair to call the population of the time racist, with 'attitudes it would have been almost impossible not to have held'.²⁰⁷ Foot cited a 1965 Oxford University student survey of several hundred Smethwick residents, where 33 per cent were found to be 'bigoted in their prejudices'; only 31 per cent offering 'reasonable views' about immigrants.²⁰⁸ Local concern about immigration mounted after 1960. It featured heavily in the influential local newspaper, the *Smethwick Telephone*, in a letters page frequently headed 'the colour problem'.²⁰⁹ In 1961 there was a rent strike in the new council maisonettes in Price Street, Windmill Lane, against the rehousing of a Pakistani family from slum clearance.²¹⁰ Harris related the consequence beyond the immediate political row: 'If immigrants moved into your area there were certain moves out, rightly or wrongly, but that's what happened'.²¹¹

²⁰⁶ 'Midlands News: 07.12.1964:Smethwick Race Question', Midlands News, 4 July 2014 [Film], <<http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-07121964-smethwick-race-question/MediaEntry/7684.html>>. A contemporary local news film was later reported as stating that no white families had bought houses in the last three and a half years, i.e. 1961–64: 'Not everything is black and white—Marshall Street then and now', *Express & Star*, 30 November 2013.

²⁰⁷ Severn, 'Interview'.

²⁰⁸ Foot, 'Immigration and Race', 75.

²⁰⁹ In 1963, the *Smethwick Telephone* devoted 1,650 column inches to the issue of immigration: Foot, 'Immigration and Race', 68. A contemporary youth club from Manchester undertook a project on race in Smethwick, which included many examples of the *Smethwick Telephone* letters page: Gary Robinson, 'Race Relations in Smethwick', [analysis of local newspaper articles], Manchester: Jewish Youth Club, 1962. A good illustration of reported white attitudes can be seen in: 'I tell you, he said I saw 18 beds carried into that house', *Daily Mail*, 13 March 1964.

²¹⁰ 'Tenants begin "colour" rent strike', *Smethwick Telephone*, 25 July 1961.

²¹¹ Harris, 'Interview'.

Why Marshall Street changed and so swiftly seems a neglected issue compared to the continued coverage of the housewives' deputation to the housing minister; and the council's plan to restrict further BME inflow (Chapter 4).²¹² Despite the population shift, Marshall Street did not share the characteristics of 'middle ring' neighbourhoods in Birmingham such as Handsworth, which Rex and Moore, drawing on the Chicago School, described as 'twilight areas' or a 'zone of transition'.²¹³ The housing tenure of the street was shifting to owner-occupation at this time, with private renting down to 32 per cent by 1971.²¹⁴ Marshall Street was outside the comprehensive redevelopment areas and the associated blight. House prices in the street ranged considerably from £950 to £3,000 in the mid-1960s and so it was affordable, although mortgage lending was still stringent.²¹⁵ Through a degree of necessity as well as cultural preference, BME buyers commonly paid in cash. This was convenient for white residents exiting for aspirational 'pull' as well as 'push' ('flight') factors.²¹⁶ Severn located the Marshall Street episode as happening in a poor area at a time of accelerating economic change, wholesale neighbourhood redevelopment and the wider cultural upheaval of 1960s Britain.²¹⁷

²¹² In April 1965, five women from Marshall Street and escorted by Smethwick MP Peter Griffiths met Richard Crossman, the Minister for Housing and Local Government, handing them a petition supporting the council's plan to buy houses in the street to block further immigrants: *'Press conference—Housing Minister'*, Midlands News, 9 April 1965 [Television news broadcast], MACE: <<http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-09041965-press-conference-housing-minister/MediaEntry/8037.html>> accessed 28 August 2014; Prem, *'Parliamentary Leper'*, 147-8. On the contemporary and recent coverage see: 'A woman's views on Marshall Street', *Smethwick Telephone & Weekly Courier*, 15 January 1965; 'Marshall Street', *Express & Star*; 'Smethwick—What happened to the English town that once tried to ban non-whites from buying homes?', *International Business Times*, 20 December 2013. Also see a somewhat sensational account in *Britain's Racist Election* (Channel 4, 14 March 2015), Stephen Finnigan (dir.). A useful exploration of changing attitudes is provided by 'England in 1966: Racism and ignorance in the Midlands', *BBC News: Birmingham and the Black Country* [Local news website], (updated 1 June 2016) <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-36388761>>, accessed 3 June 2016.

²¹³ Rex and Moore, *'Race, Community, and Conflict'*, 29, 272-85.

²¹⁴ See SN 17: Marshall Street and West Smethwick.

²¹⁵ 'Uneasy Street', *Daily Mail*, 8 December 1964.

²¹⁶ 'Uneasy Street', *Daily Mail*.

²¹⁷ Severn, 'Interview'.

Several interviewees argued international migration was the biggest single driver of change in Smethwick, because it replaced the population so visibly.²¹⁸ In commenting on the white historical perspective, Severn said: 'Smethwick is emblematic of a vanished world'.²¹⁹ By the 1970s, Smethwick was established as a multi-ethnic area, which distinguished it from some northern towns and from East Birmingham.²²⁰ The locations of the original BME settlement: Indian (Sikh) in West Smethwick; Bangladeshi in North Smethwick; and Pakistani in Cape Hill could nevertheless still be mapped in 2011 (Figure 3.22). The African-Caribbean population was by then dispersing away from Windmill Lane. So in 1951, 2.8 per cent of the population was born outside the UK. By 1961, it was 6.5 per cent and in 1971, 14 per cent. By 2011, it was 30.9 per cent – and over 40 per cent in the northern half of Smethwick (Figure 3.23).²²¹ The wider measure of ethnicity (rather than country of origin) was first recorded in the 1991 census, when the BME population in Smethwick was 33.3 per cent.²²² It was 61.3 per cent in 2011 (Table 3.1).

²¹⁸ Harris, 'Interview'; Roger Page, 'Interview with Author', 15 July 2013; Cressida Dickens, 'Interview with Author', 11 October 2013; Alan Vernon, 'Interview with Author', 2 July 2013. Page was a Labour councillor for Bristnall ward and past resident of Windmill Lane. Dickens grew up in Smethwick as the daughter of Charles Dickens, the Conservative election agent for Peter Griffiths in the 1964 general election. Vernon was a Conservative councillor for Soho ward on Smethwick Council in 1964-66.

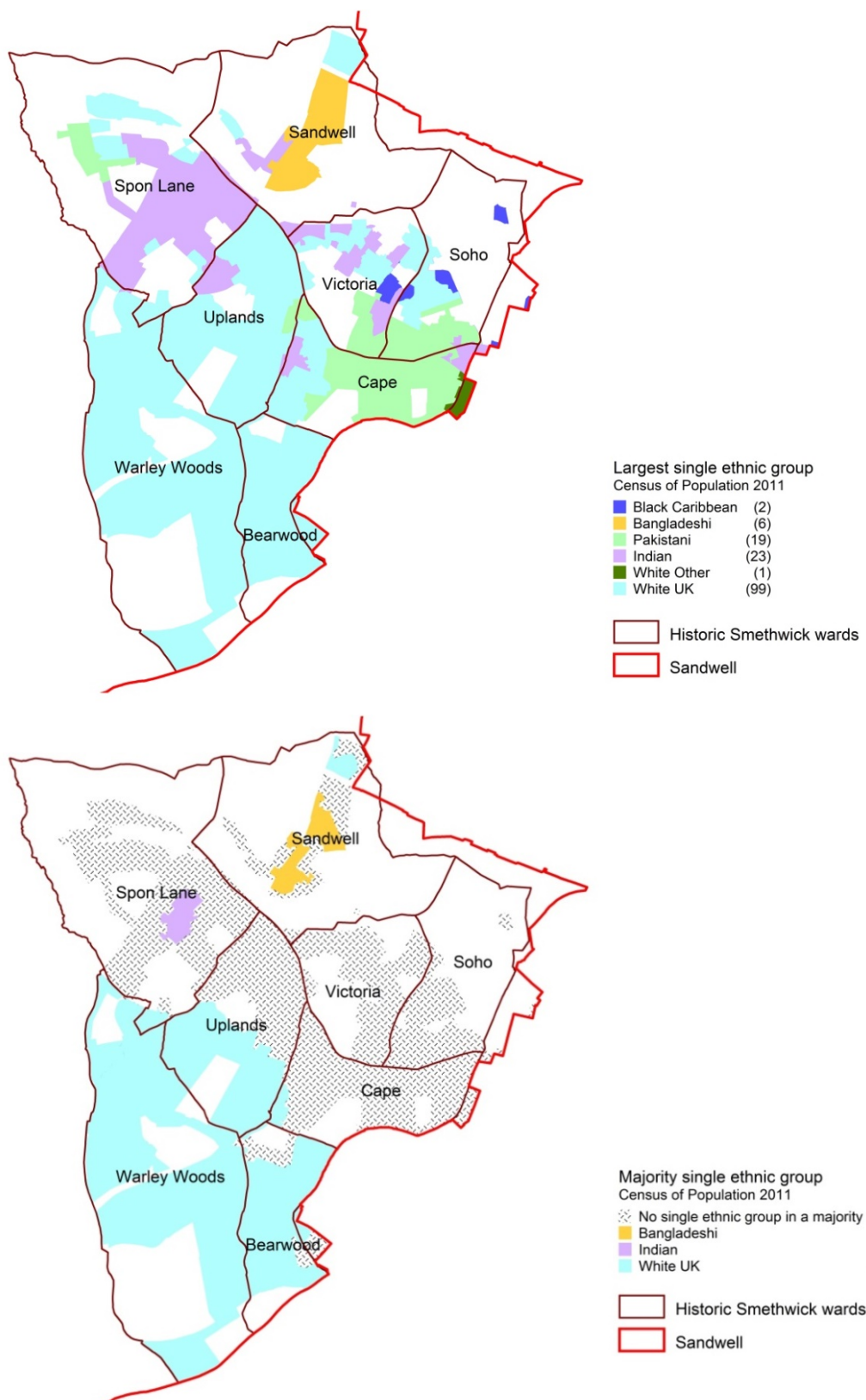
²¹⁹ Severn, 'Interview'.

²²⁰ Chris Khamis, 'Interviews with Author', 6 November 2013, 4 February 2014 and 3 March 2016. Khamis was a fellow director of CSR Partnership with the author who particularly worked with the Smethwick Regeneration Partnership.

²²¹ See SN 17: Marshall Street and West Smethwick.

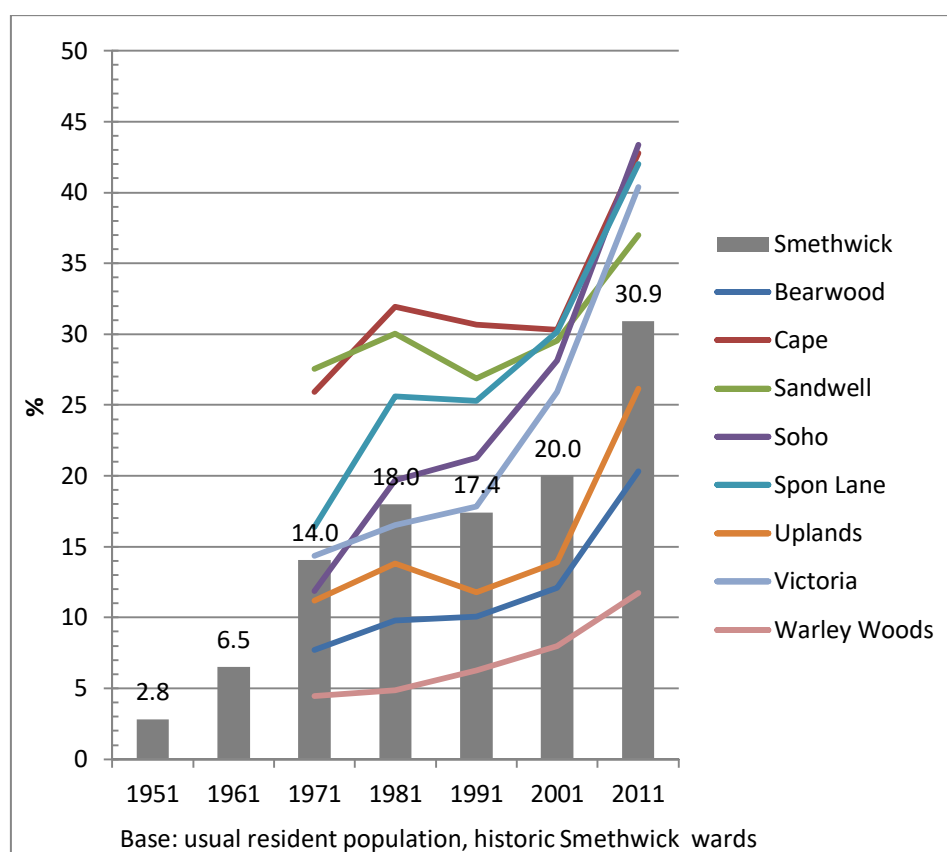
²²² Also see SN 16: Ethnicity.

Figure 3.22: Ethnicity and Locality in Smethwick, 2011



Source: see Table 3.1: Ethnic Groups in historic Smethwick, 1991 and 2011. Adapted census and map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

Figure 3.23: Smethwick population Not Born in the UK, 1951 to 2011



Source: Special Note 17: Social and Physical change in Marshall Street and West Smethwick. Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

Table 3.1: Ethnic Groups in historic Smethwick, 1991 and 2011

	1991		2011	
	Persons	%	Persons	%
White	32,218	66.7	— ^A	— ^A
White UK	— ^A	— ^A	19,823	38.7
White other	— ^A	— ^A	3,093	6.0
Mixed	— ^A	— ^A	2,433	4.7
Indian	8,518	17.6	7,780	15.2
Pakistani	2,598	5.4	6,133	12.0
Bangladeshi	820	1.7	2,249	4.4
Other Asian	183	0.4	2,277	4.4
Black Caribbean	2,779	5.8	3,102	6.0
Black African	65	0.1	1,657	3.2
Other Black	569	1.2	919	1.8
Chinese	72	0.1	201	0.4
Other ethnic group	463	1.0	1,619	3.2
<i>BME population</i>	<i>16,068</i>	<i>33.3</i>	<i>31,462</i>	<i>61.3</i>
Total population	48,287	100	51,285	100.0

Base: Usual resident population, historic Smethwick area.

^A Denotes data not available for this category in this year.

Source: Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1991 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table SO6; Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2011 England and Wales: Census Area Statistics', Table KS201EW.

Note: Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0.

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In the decades since their first arrival, BME communities sustained Smethwick.²²³

Neglect by historians can mean migrant stories remain hidden, which Gilroy called

'historylessness'.²²⁴ This is less true of Smethwick.²²⁵ BME communities put down roots and

²²³ Jeffrey, 'Interview'; John Garrett, 'Interview with Author', 24 June 2013. Garrett was a social worker in Smethwick in the 1980s and later Deputy Chief Executive of Sandwell MBC.

²²⁴ Dick and Dudrah, 'Ethnic Community Histories'; Paul Gilroy, *Black Britain: A Photographic History* (London: Saqi, 2007) cited in David Parker and Christian Karner, 'Remembering the Alum Rock Road: Reputational geographies and spatial biographies', *Midland History*, 36/2 (2011), 292–309, <<http://www.maneyonline.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1179/004772911X13074595849275>>, accessed 15 December 2014, 293.

²²⁵ There is a recent account of the Bangladeshi experience: Mohammed, 'Bangladesh to Smethwick'. Prem related the race-charged atmosphere of 1960s' Smethwick: Prem, 'Parliamentary Leper'. The contemporary activities of the Indian Workers Association are also documented through oral histories: 'The Land of Money?', *Birmingham Black Oral History Project* [searchable website], <<http://www.bbohp.org.uk/node/21>>, accessed 8 January 2015. However, the interviews undertaken for this thesis identify the need to capture respective Sikh, Pakistani and Black Caribbean experiences: Josan, 'Interview'; Amir Afzal, 'Interview with Author', 10 March 2014; Diane Wright, 'Interview with Author', 4 February 2014; Aynols Reid, 'Interview with Author', 13 February 2014. Afzal was chair of Smethwick Pakistani Muslim Association. Wright was a senior council officer

developed a community infrastructure and BME-owned businesses diversified the local economy. A short-lived Asian clothing industry centred on Rolfe Street employed 1,700 people in 1991.²²⁶ Firms like 2 Sisters Food and East End Foods were significant employers in 2013.²²⁷ However, industrial disputes with mainly-Asian female workforces at Raindi (1982) and Burnsalls (1992) were bitter and protracted (Figure 3.24).²²⁸ Gurdwaras, mosques and Black churches were established in Smethwick, alongside a flourishing BME third sector. The Guru Nanak Gurdwara opened in 1961 as the first Sikh temple located outside the Punjab.²²⁹ Around 2000, it was totally rebuilt, complete with nine halls, ‘to gleam majestically’ as its website put it in 2012, when a further £9 million expansion was also underway.²³⁰ The North Smethwick Housing Development Trust grew from community resistance to council plans to demolish property in Sydenham Road, a mainly-Bangladeshi area.²³¹ This also led to the eventual development of the North Smethwick Resource Centre in Cambridge Road.²³²

and Windmill Lane resident. Reid was a Windmill Lane resident active in ‘Friends and Neighbours’ and a former chair of Cape Hill and Windmill Area Sure Start.

²²⁶ Annual Employment Survey 1991—see SN 10: Employment data. Howard Anderson, Narinder Bahia, and Al Davis, ‘The Clothes Showdown: The future of the West Midlands clothing industry’, [research study], Birmingham: West Midlands Low Pay Unit, 1991, 15. Also Dilbagh Dhami, ‘Meeting with Author’, 19 May 2011.

²²⁷ John Spellar, ‘Interview with Author’, 21 June 2013. Spellar was MP for Warley after 1997.

²²⁸ On the Raindi dispute, see ‘*Textile dispute*’, Central News, 21 October 1982 [Television news broadcast], MACE: <<http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/central-news-21101982-textile-dispute/MediaEntry/39536.html>> accessed 28 August 2014; Bishton, ‘*Sweat Shop Report*’, 44-9. On the Burnsalls dispute, see ‘Critical Eye’, *Daily Mail*, 30 September 1993; ‘Punjabi, poor and mad as hell: A group of Asian women took on their bosses. They lost their strike, but won a human rights award’, *Independent*, 10 December 1993.

²²⁹ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, ‘Smethwick’, 134.

²³⁰ Guru Nanak Gurdwara Smethwick, ‘Waheguru Jee Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Jee Ki Fateh’, [religious website], <<http://www.gngsmethwick.com/>>, accessed 5 September 2012.

²³¹ Johur Uddin, ‘Interview with Author’, 10 July 2013; Doug Parish, ‘Interview with Author’, 16 December 2013. Uddin was Chief Executive of Community Connect Foundation, which operated from the North Smethwick Resource Centre. Parish was an environmental health officer at Sandwell from 1974, with responsibility for private sector clearance until 1996.

²³² Uddin, ‘Interview’. This was funded by SRB4, a regeneration programme discussed in Chapter 4.

Figure 3.24: Strikers at Raindi Textiles, Smethwick, 1982



Source: 'Strikers at Raindi Textiles, Smethwick', from <<http://jubilee.plmcreative.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/raindhi2.jpg?4085fa>>, 1982. © Jubilee Arts Archive 1974–1994. Reproduced under the terms of the Creative Commons licence 'Attribution Non-commercial' (CC BY-NC). Accessed 29 January 2016.

In 1981, the *Smethwick News Telephone* ran a centre-page feature on community relations at the time of the Scarman Report.²³³ It recalled the 1964 Smethwick election (Chapter 4) and interviewed residents, community leaders and councillors who argued Smethwick had changed for the better. One theme was about avoiding misunderstanding through building meaningful interaction between communities, subsequently described as the social capital and 'bridging' and 'bonding' activity of what is termed 'community cohesion'.²³⁴ Garrett referred to Holly Lodge, a Smethwick secondary school 'where

²³³ 'Ahead of Scarman', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 3 December 1981.

²³⁴ Cohesion is principally the process that must happen in all communities to ensure different groups of people get on well together: Commission on Integration and Community Cohesion, 'Our Shared Future', [opinion piece], *Final Report*, Wetherby: Commission on Integration and Community Cohesion, 2007, 9. Bonding social capital is the relations within relatively homogeneous groups, such as residents of a small

tensions both play out and where they are in part resolved; it's almost an enclosed example of those sorts of challenges'.²³⁵ Khamis noted the absence of disturbances in Smethwick in 2011, unlike adjacent north-west Birmingham and indeed West Bromwich.²³⁶ However, deprivation data showed continued disadvantage in mainly BME localities, with divergence between specific groups (Chapter 6).²³⁷

Analysis of new GP registrations showed 3,644 people in the three northern Smethwick wards arrived from abroad in 2004–9.²³⁸ Soho and Victoria had arrivals from 64 different countries in this period.²³⁹ Already by 2003, a school in the ward, Victoria Park Primary, had pupils speaking 33 different languages, mainly through asylum seeker and refugee arrivals.²⁴⁰ This made Smethwick in the twenty-first century 'super-diverse' beyond its previously multi-ethnic basis. Like the 1960s, immigrants to Smethwick in the 2000s typically used the growing private rented sector, often with BME landlords.²⁴¹ This process of ethnic residential succession ('backfilling') is a continued feature of UK conurbations.²⁴²

neighbourhood, a religious or an ethnically specific organisation. Bridging social capital is the relations between heterogeneous groups within an area or groups outside an area: CSK Strategies, 'Urban Living Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan', [consultancy report], Smethwick: Urban Living Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder, 2009, 24. Also see SN 16: Ethnicity.

²³⁵ Garrett, 'Interview'.

²³⁶ Khamis, 'Interviews'.

²³⁷ Richard Young, 'Interviews with Author', 31 May 2012, 25 September 2013 and 23 April 2014. Young was a Labour councillor for Bristnall ward in 1991 to 2004 and Vice Chair of housing, Chair of Finance and Deputy Leader of Sandwell MBC who also lived in Windmill Lane.

²³⁸ Data is for General Practitioners (surgery-based doctors in the National Health Service) – see Urban Living: Birmingham-Sandwell Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder, 'Urban Living Review 2003–2011: A Story of Regeneration', [council report], Smethwick: Urban Living, 2011, 23.

²³⁹ This figure was calculated by the author when working at Urban Living from the GP data mentioned above. Brushstrokes, a community project serving Soho and Victoria also indicated on its website that it worked with local asylum-seekers and arrivals from more than sixty countries (and see Chapter 5): Brushstrokes Community Project, 'Brushstrokes', [showcase website], <<http://www.brushstrokessandwell.org.uk/>>, accessed 14 August 2015.

²⁴⁰ 'The school where the pupils speak 33 languages', *Daily Mail*, 28 January 2003.

²⁴¹ Gurinder Singh Josan, 'Meeting with Author', 29 November 2007; Uddin, 'Interview'.

²⁴² Clapson, 'Suburban Aspiration', 160; 'Measuring Diversity', *Economist*.

One consequence of super-diversity, as review by the council put it, is that: 'People's identities are becoming more multi-layered and world events have local ramifications'.²⁴³ Another is the potentially negative impact on community cohesion. A study by Laurence and Heath found: 'Living in an area which has a broad mix of residents from different ethnic groups was consistently shown to be a positive predictor of cohesion. However, having an increasing percentage of in-migrants born outside the UK, is a negative predictor'; the rapidity of the change, not the absolute numbers being critical.²⁴⁴ According to Morgan, new refugee communities from Somalia and mainly housed by the council in Soho and Victoria ward, faced language barriers and conflict as 'freshies' within the local youth culture.²⁴⁵ A 2008 study identified the importance of group identity and territorial conflict in the growth of gangs in Smethwick and parts of West Bromwich.²⁴⁶

To conclude this section, immigration was an early component of Smethwick's population upswing and the most dynamic element of postwar demographic change, with significant housing and job market impacts. The wide variety of white and BME experiences include stories of adversity, tensions, rootedness, and community interactions. Notions of 'community togetherness' need to be tempered by recognition of how differences are

²⁴³ Sandwell MBC, 'Report of the Select Committee on Community Cohesion', Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2007, 49. Put more positively, globalisation and cheap travel brings a sense in which people can feel attachments to other parts of the world, while still enjoying clear and strong 'roots' in this country.

²⁴⁴ James Laurence and Anthony Heath, 'Predictors of Community Cohesion: Multi-level modelling of the 2005 Citizenship Survey', [academic study], London: Department for Communities and Local Government, 2008, 7, 12.

²⁴⁵ Jenny Morgan, 'From Civil War to the Cult of Cool', *50.50 inclusive democracy* [political website], <<http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/jenny-morgan/from-civil-war-to-cult-of-cool>>, accessed 7 September 2012.

²⁴⁶ Clive Harris and Kennley Bailey, 'Choices': Gangs and Young People Research Project', [consultancy report], West Bromwich: Race Equality Sandwell, 2008, 3.

generated in the face of adverse social relations.²⁴⁷ These dynamics remained delicate and with population growth and the advent of ‘super-diversity’, an important governance focus.

Conclusions

This chapter outlines the external shocks affecting Smethwick after 1945, a principal theme and research question of the thesis. As Young put it: ‘Smethwick changed. People, place and the economy spiralling down and rebounding off each other. It was a system-impact’.²⁴⁸ Dispersal of population and economic activity away from metropolitan centres was the prevailing flow in the twentieth-century. Smethwick was defined by its industrial prowess, but decline was inevitable and painful, leaving a legacy of deprivation. By 2015, and in contrast to Salford, no strong post-industrial economic driver was available, despite proximity to central Birmingham. This loss of basis was compensated by sustained immigration that made Smethwick multi-ethnic and then ‘super-diverse’; reversing long-term population decline. Its interwoven community history was exemplified by the nationally-prominent Marshall Street episode, but also the story of Europe’s first Sikh temple. The vicissitudes of these years—the scale, complexity and rapidity of structural ‘givens’—presented an enormous governance challenge. And just as local government was embarked on physically transforming Smethwick, it was being reorganised by central government.

²⁴⁷ Parker and Long, 'Reimagining Birmingham', 175.

²⁴⁸ Young, 'Interviews'.

CHAPTER 4 GOVERNANCE, HOUSING AND REGENERATION IN SMETHWICK AND SANDWELL

The scale, complexity and rapidity of the structural forces shaping Smethwick imposed an environment of decline and crisis for its reorganised local government; the new entities of Warley and then Sandwell. This chapter considers the effectiveness of these councils as the local dimension of policy and governance after 1945, as identified in the research question. It assesses the management of decline in relation to political relationships, community engagement and the changing position of Smethwick. The first sections explore the basis of local governance, its structure and culture. The middle sections explore the postwar redevelopment, problematic council system-build and subsequent crisis-management of housing. The final section examines local approaches to securing and delivering nationally-funded area-based regeneration initiatives in Smethwick and wider Sandwell.

4.1 Local Government Reorganisation, Crisis and the 'Politics of Power'

This section traces the origin and end of Smethwick as a freestanding town due to local government reorganisation. It also develops an earlier argument that governance is shaped by particular cultures or 'ways of thinking' about problems, choices and policy.¹ Gamble furthermore distinguished between the 'politics of power' relating to 'creative and continuous' governance and its priorities, realities and constraints; and the conflicting demands of the 'politics of support', the intermittent electoral terrain mediated through

¹ See Chapter 2.

competitive political parties.² 'High politics' or 'statecraft' is thereby subject to populist debate.³ This section examines the 'power' aspect: the political conduct of governance, within the changing freedoms available to local government. The subsequent section addresses the popular-electoral 'support' aspect of governance. Relevant to both is 'municipal labourism', depicted by Young as the 'paternal version of politics that stayed in one-party states like Sandwell'.⁴

The development of local government to meet the pressures of early urbanisation and industrialisation was seen in Chapter 3. Long distinct within the Parish of Harborne and with its first church in 1732, Smethwick had its own vestry officials as constables, to manage roads and to deal with the destitute.⁵ By 1851 Smethwick's population had far outstripped its Harborne counterpart, with poor sanitation, overcrowding and pollution prevalent. A cholera outbreak prompted the establishment of an elected board of health in 1856, which developed public services and infrastructure.⁶ Early political life was dominated by the new

² Andrew Gamble, *The Conservative Nation* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), 3-11.

³ Andrew Gamble, *The Free Economy and the Strong State: The politics of Thatcherism* (2nd edn.; Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), 167-8.

⁴ Richard Young, 'Interviews with Author', 31 May 2012, 25 September 2013 and 23 April 2014. This recalled a comment by a past Chief Executive to the author when he was an elected member: 'Sandwell is a place where people make few demands of themselves or of others'. Such paternalism also attracted comment from Brendan Nevin, 'Interviews with Author', 6 August and 24 September 2013, 7 September 2015; Geoff Taylor, 'Interview with Author', 12 July 2013; Ken Duffell, 'Interview with Author', 4 July 2013; David Hallam, 'Interview with Author', 11 June 2013; Ged Lucas, 'Interview with Author', 17 October 2013; Peter Wilkinson, 'Interview with Author', 6 June 2013; Nevin, 'Interviews'. Young was a Labour councillor for Bristnall ward in 1991–2004 and Vice Chair of housing, Chair of Finance and Deputy Leader of Sandwell who also lived in Windmill Lane. Taylor was a past Sandwell Labour councillor and chair of Warley East Labour Party. Duffell was a Labour councillor for Victoria ward on Warley Council in 1966–68. Hallam was a Sandwell Labour councillor for Victoria ward from 1976–79. Lucas was Director of Housing in Sandwell from 1992–97. Wilkinson worked in Sandwell housing department from 1973–2007 as an area manager, district housing manager, special projects manager and head of housing strategy.

⁵ G. C. Baugh, M. W. Greenslade, and D. A. Johnson, 'Smethwick', in M. W. Greenslade (ed.), *History of the County of Stafford* (The Victoria History of the Counties of England, XVII; London: University of London, Institute of Historical Research, 1976), 118-9; K. W. Inskip, 'Smethwick from Hamlet to County Borough: A brief history', [research study], Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1966, 9.

⁶ Inskip, 'Hamlet to County Borough', 9; Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 121-2, 136.

industrialists, with the Chance and Mitchell families as major benefactors, donating or securing public parks, providing alms-houses and subscribing to new churches.⁷

Following rapid urban growth beyond its 1838 boundary, Birmingham Corporation by 1887 proposed to absorb all but one of the surrounding districts.⁸ The exception was Smethwick, with a population of 36,170.⁹ In one account, 'Birmingham had definitely declined to include Smethwick in its expansion scheme'.¹⁰ In 1888, a motion to the board of health that Smethwick should seek to be part of Birmingham was defeated only by the casting vote of the chairman, Arthur Keen.¹¹ In contrast Harborne, shorn of Smethwick in 1856, was incorporated into Birmingham in 1891, despite its initial opposition.¹² This curious omission by Birmingham led to Smethwick becoming a self-governing town.¹³ It gained local authority status in 1894 and was elevated to a county borough in 1907 (Figure 4.1).¹⁴ It unsuccessfully attempted to annexe neighbouring Oldbury in 1920 and 1926.¹⁵

⁷ Smethwick Corporation, 'Smethwick Staffordshire—The Official Industrial Handbook', [council report], Cheltenham: Ed. J. Burrow, 1959, 71.

⁸ Asa Briggs, *Borough and City, 1865–1938* (History of Birmingham, Vol. II; London: Oxford University Press, 1952), 141.

⁹ Special Note 5: Creating a Population time series for historic Smethwick. Smethwick was covered by the Birmingham Tame and Rea District Drainage Board which otherwise largely formed the area targeted by Birmingham for its expansion: Briggs, *Borough and City*, 141.

¹⁰ Jephcott, a local historian: 'Maker of modern Smethwick', *Smethwick Telephone*, 26 August 1950.

¹¹ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 119. There is no mention of this board of health vote or any Birmingham interest in absorbing Smethwick in the corporation's history of the city: Briggs, *Borough and City*, Chapter V Greater Birmingham.

¹² Briggs, *Borough and City*, 142-3.

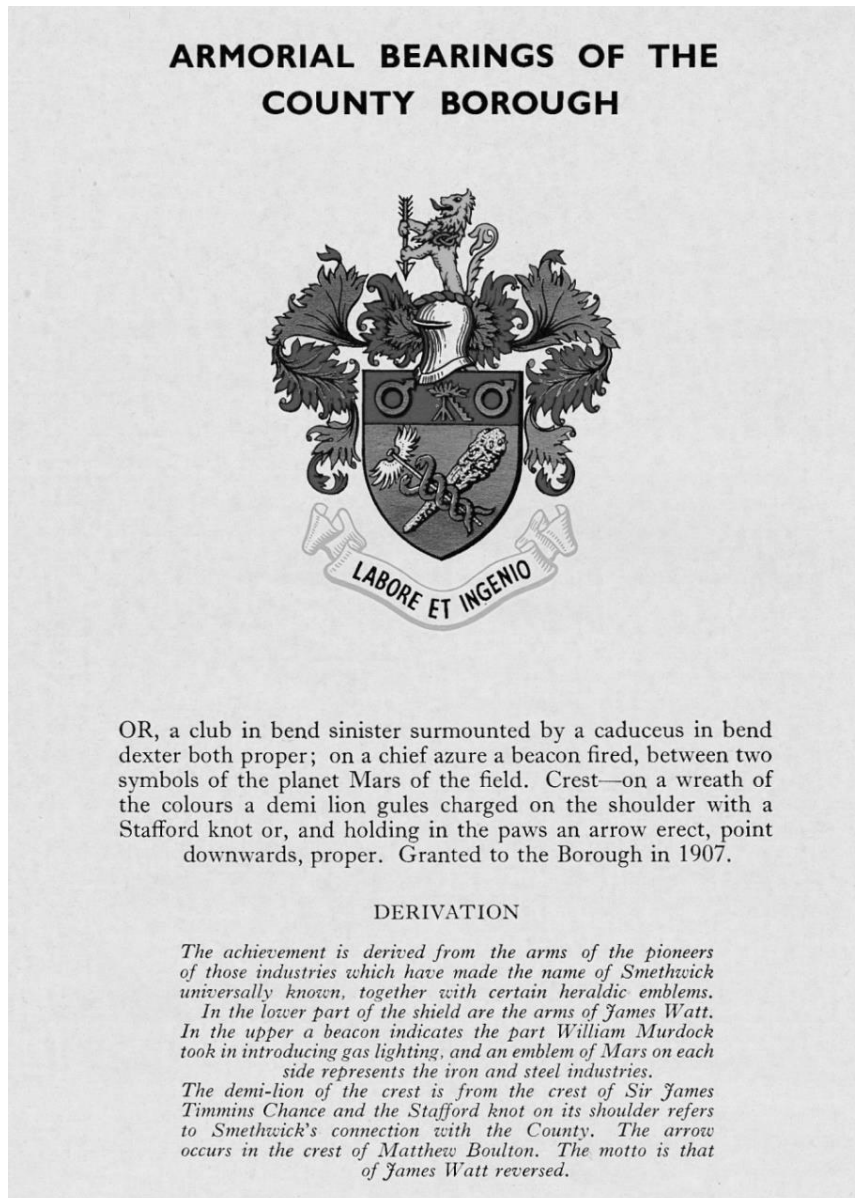
¹³ 'Boundary changes are nothing new', *News Telephone*, 4 April 1974.

¹⁴ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 119. Following a local campaign, Smethwick joined five existing county boroughs in the conurbation created following the Local Government Act 1888, which had set a population threshold of 50,000. County boroughs were the only local authorities exercising the full range of powers accorded to local government. Elsewhere, responsibilities were divided between municipal boroughs, urban or rural districts on the one hand, and county councils on the other: West Midland Group, *Conurbation: A Survey of Birmingham and the Black Country* (London: Architectural Press, 1948), 50. For the hierarchy of local authorities in the West Midlands conurbation in 1945 see Figure 1.2, Chapter 1.

¹⁵ See Special Note 23: The Smethwick Development Plan and 'overspill' housing.

Although part of Oldbury was shortly transferred to Smethwick, in surface area it remained the smallest of 75 provincial county boroughs.

Figure 4.1: Smethwick County Borough, 1907 to 1966



Source: 'Armorial Bearings of the County Borough of Smethwick', from Smethwick Corporation, *Smethwick Staffordshire: The Official Industrial Handbook*, 1959, 50. © Burrows Communications Ltd. Reproduced with permission of Burrows Communications: Olivia Eisinger, 15 February 2016.

The postwar *Conurbation Study* criticised the ‘number, variety and ill-adjusted sizes and boundaries’ of local authorities in the Black Country’.¹⁶ It highlighted the disparity of resources and competition, although some joint arrangements were in place.¹⁷ The appointment of a national Boundary Commission in 1945 prompted several local reorganisation proposals in the conurbation, including a merger of Smethwick with West Bromwich, which did not proceed.¹⁸ In 1958, legislation established a Local Government Commission to review size, function and boundaries, with a new population threshold of 100,000 for county borough status (Smethwick’s was 76,407 in 1951).¹⁹ The West Midlands was designated as an area where urgent reform was needed, requiring a special review. The Government accepted the resulting proposals, which were implemented in 1966 after legal delays.²⁰ Four of the existing county boroughs in the Black Country absorbed surrounding and intermingling boroughs and urban districts.

The decision to combine Smethwick with Oldbury and Rowley Regis as Warley, a new county borough, had early active support from the three authorities.²¹ This was announced by Smethwick before the Local Government Commission commenced work. Smethwick Corporation did not outline its justification, or encourage any public debate on the loss of an

¹⁶ West Midland Group, *'Conurbation Study'*, 63.

¹⁷ West Midland Group, *'Conurbation Study'*, 52, 58.

¹⁸ West Midland Group, *'Conurbation Study'*, 62. Also see SN 23: Smethwick Development Plan and ‘overspill’ housing.

¹⁹ See SN 5: Smethwick Population. On local government reorganisation, see Geoffrey Price, *'Smethwick: The evolution and modern character of an industrial county borough'*, unpublished BA dissertation, University of Leicester, 1963, 79.

²⁰ 'W. Midlands local govt. changes plan', *Financial Times*, 11 November 1965.

²¹ Roger Page, 'Interview with Author', 15 July 2013. Page was a Sandwell Labour councillor for Bristnall ward and past resident of Windmill Lane.

independent Smethwick in five newsletter articles on reorganisation.²² The Foreword to the published history of the corporation concluded by remarking: 'On a solid base with three new legs a new town will grow and flourish mightily'.²³ Party political control alternated in Warley, with the unpopularity of the Wilson and Heath governments resulting in significant local electoral swings.²⁴ Voting turnout fell sharply.²⁵ This marked the greater influence of national politics at the local level compared to the 1950s, with the remoteness of the new large Warley local authority also a factor.²⁶ Rate and rent levels, comprehensive education and (eventually) municipal housebuilding divided the parties.²⁷

Reorganisation of local government in the Black Country was substantial, but progress nationally was limited until legislation in 1972.²⁸ This brought together Warley and West Bromwich as a new district in 1974, administered by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC), with a population of 330,159.²⁹ Described as a 'shotgun marriage' locally, the compromise name of Sandwell reflected the fact that both previous districts contained a

²² 'Local Government Commission for England', *Smethwick Civic News*, January 1959; 'Local government reorganisation', *Smethwick Civic News*, February 1959; 'Local government reorganisation', *Smethwick Civic News*, April 1960; 'Housing register', *Smethwick Civic News*, December 1960; 'Local Government Reorganisation', *Smethwick Civic News*, August 1961.

²³ Inskip, 'Hamlet to County Borough', 1.

²⁴ Warley was controlled by Labour in 1966–7, by the Conservatives in 1967–72 and by Labour in 1972–4.

²⁵ See Special Note 19: Electoral Politics in Smethwick and Sandwell.

²⁶ Lewis Baston, 'Labour Local Government 1900–1999', in Brian Brivati and Richard Heffernan (eds.), *The Labour Party—A Centenary History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 458; Taylor, 'Interview'; Page, 'Interview'; Martin Prestidge, 'Interview with Author', 12 July 2013; Trevor Harris, 'Interview with Author', 10 September 2013. Prestidge was a Sandwell Labour councillor for Soho ward in Smethwick in 1973–75 and Langley from 1987 to 2012. Harris was a retired Smethwick Headteacher who grew up in Smethwick.

²⁷ Prestidge, 'Interview'.

²⁸ Baston, 'Labour Local Government', 463.

²⁹ 'This is Sandwell', *News Telephone*, 28 March 1974. Figure based on the population total for West Bromwich (166,592) and Warley (163,567): Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1981 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table c71s01 032. Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

ward of that name.³⁰ The physical core and focal point for the new district was plainly West Bromwich Town Centre, but the nettle of naming the new entity 'West Bromwich' was not grasped. Hallam recalled: 'There was no understanding of what Sandwell was; it had no resonance for people at all'.³¹

Like the 1888 vote that led to a Smethwick Corporation, the 1966/74 reorganisations were critical junctures that profoundly altered the position of Smethwick and how it was managed as a 'place'.³² Smethwick was now one of Sandwell's 'six towns'. Inevitably it counted for less in the new arrangements.³³ The political governing focus was now Sandwell: around a service function (such as housing or education); or theme (such as human resources or later, equality) through committee and then cabinet positions.³⁴ There were initially no area structures.³⁵

Sandwell MBC inherited different information technology and management practices from its predecessors, with the necessary organisational and cultural adjustments dominating its early years.³⁶ Such costs, high inflation and government spending cuts led to

³⁰ Taylor, 'Interview'.

³¹ Hallam, 'Interview'. Also see Wim Derksen, 'Municipal Amalgamation and the doubtful relation between Size and Performance', *Local Government Studies*, 14/6 (1988), 31–47; 'The town that has no middle class', *New Statesman*, 13 November 2000.

³² Also see 'Boundary Changes', *News Telephone*.

³³ See Special Note 18: Basis of Smethwick in Warley and Sandwell.

³⁴ Young, 'Interviews'.

³⁵ Steve Eling, 'Interviews with Author', 18 July and 11 September 2013. Eling was a Sandwell Labour councillor for Abbey ward from 1986, deputy leader with responsibility for finance, past chair/cabinet member for regeneration, vice chair of housing, and chair of the Tipton and Smethwick regeneration partnerships.

³⁶ 'Scathing attack on the "hotch-potch" of Sandwell', *News Telephone*, 21 November 1974; 'The exploding cost of local government? A case study', *Financial Times*, 29 January 1975; "'Council in chaos" hints angry MP', *News Telephone*, 23 November 1975; Hallam, 'Interview'.

significant rate increases in the aftermath of 1974 across the new metropolitan councils.³⁷ Sandwell increased business rates by 29.5 per cent in 1980 and 20.2 per cent in 1981.³⁸ As the Smethwick example of GKN showed, this soured relations with local business in a four-year period when the Sandwell economy lost 37,900 jobs (21 per cent) through deindustrialisation (Chapter 3).³⁹ Further cuts to council spending in the 1980s and 1990s followed, with local government services privatised or passed to other public bodies.⁴⁰

Reorganisation, austerity and economic dislocation posed significant governance challenges. Despite this sharply-changing world, Sandwell was inward-looking and highly conservative.⁴¹ The Audit Commission concluded the council had no clear strategy and were content 'to carry on as before'. 'Almost any new initiative will cost money,' its 1987 report stated, 'but the council is by no means short of it.' It criticised the hoarding of £24m in reserves while underspending on social services by £3.2m annually.⁴² Weak strategic leadership was linked to committee and departmental structures largely unchanged since 1974.⁴³

³⁷ 'Sandwell rates rocket by 15p', *News Telephone*, 14 March 1974; 'Rates rise may top 100 per cent', *News Telephone*, 1 September 1975; Baston, 'Labour Local Government', 464.

³⁸ 'Bosses lash out at rates rise', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 18 June 1981.

³⁹ See Special Note 10: Employment data for Smethwick.

⁴⁰ See 'Cuts set a gloomy future', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 6 March 1980. In the period 1979 to 2010 Sandwell MBC expenditure fell in real terms (allowing for inflation and the transfer of functions) between 1982–86 (–11.9 per cent) and 1992–95 (–3.2 per cent): author's calculation based on 2012 prices (HM Treasury GDP deflator); applied to Sandwell MBC, 'Revenue Budget Books 1975/76 to 2014/15', (West Bromwich and Oldbury: Sandwell MBC).

⁴¹ Young, 'Interviews'.

⁴² 'Battle in the Black Country—A clash between Labour and the Tories in the rust belt', *The Sunday Times*, 15 March 1987. This article refers to the District Auditor's '1985–86 management letter' which unfortunately proved impossible to obtain for this research, although the author possessed the letter when originally published.

⁴³ David Valler and David Betteley, 'The Politics of "Integrated" Local Policy in England', *Urban Studies*, 38/13 (2001), 2393–413, 2400.

Sandwell's governance approach derived from a political culture shaped by single-party rule. The Labour Party enjoyed control of Sandwell from its formation, apart from 1978–79, buoyed by class and in places 'biraderi' clan-based voting allegiances (Figure 4.2).⁴⁴ By 2015, it controlled 69 of the 72 council seats and there were no Conservative councillors.⁴⁵ Political deals between largely town-based factions among Labour councillors, a carryover from Warley politics, were the enduring dynamic.⁴⁶ This was a 'winner-takes-all' approach, where the dominant faction within the controlling Labour Group monopolised senior council executive positions.⁴⁷ Thus Joe Adams served continuously on Rowley Regis, Warley and Sandwell between 1952 and 2001 and led all three authorities. Between 1974 and 2012, 41 per cent of Labour councillors exercising the principal executive responsibilities in Sandwell came from Smethwick, a share twice that of West Bromwich, easily the most populous town.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ In 1991 Sandwell was the sixth most 'working-class' district in England, accounting for 79.6 per cent of the population: David Gordon and Ray Forrest, 'People and Places 2: Social and economic distinctions in England', [academic study], Bristol: University of Bristol, Centre for Advanced Urban Studies, 1995, 13. 'Biraderi' kinship-based voting is a particular feature in BME communities from a Kashmiri heritage. See: 'Time to end Labour's Faustian pact with clan elders', *Financial Times*, 3 April 2012. Also see SN 19: Electoral Politics.

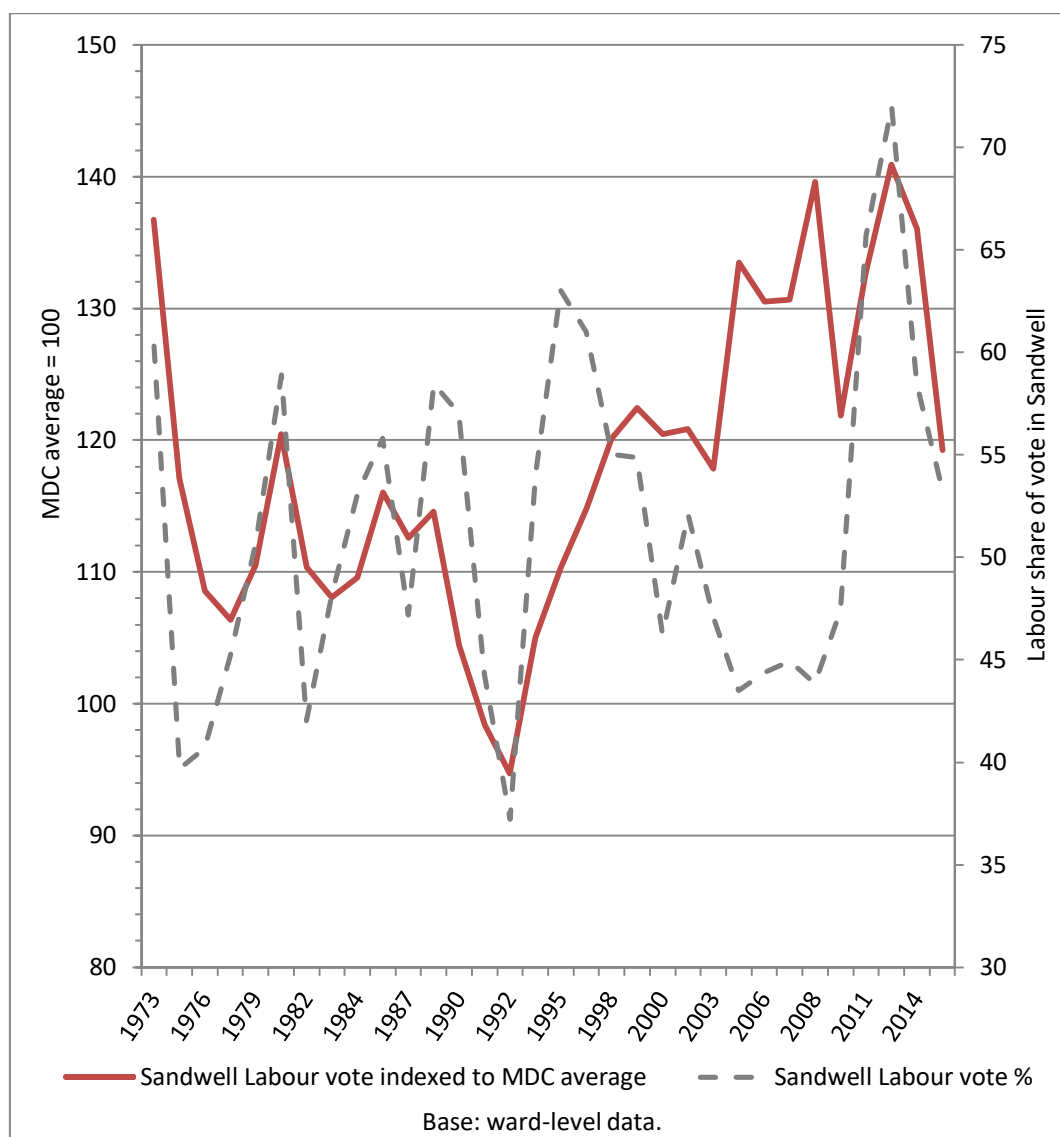
⁴⁵ Two were described as Independent Labour and one was held by UKIP—see SN 19: Electoral Politics. In 2016 this increased to 71 Labour councillors, although one was suspended due to ongoing investigation: 'Labour Party suspends Sandwell councillor Mahboob Hussain AGAIN', *Express & Star*, 18 May 2016.

⁴⁶ Duffell, 'Interview'; Prestidge, 'Interview'; Page, 'Interview'.

⁴⁷ Adam Carey, 'The Future of Sandwell Labour Group', [political paper], 1996, 5. See Special Note 20: Sandwell Labour Group Politics.

⁴⁸ See Special Note 21: Town-based analysis of Sandwell Political Executive.

Figure 4.2: Labour voting support in Sandwell and indexed to Metropolitan District average 1973 to 2015



Source: Special Note 19: Electoral Politics in Smethwick and Sandwell.

This governance culture reflected a 'self-reinforcing sequence' that created a 'path-dependency': the formation and long-term reproduction of clique-based institutional control.⁴⁹ As Mahoney stressed, functional, power, and legitimation mechanisms can underpin such reproductive processes.⁵⁰ Functionally, the system worked by providing stability through clientilism. It was also a conflictual process, which excluded significant

⁴⁹ James Mahoney, 'Path Dependence in Historical Sociology', *Theory and Society*, 29/4 (2000), 507–48, 508.

⁵⁰ Mahoney, 'Path Dependence', 509, 515, 523.

numbers of Labour councillors from influence and led to suspension and deselection.⁵¹

Power considerations were modified by actors' subjective orientations and beliefs about what was appropriate or morally correct, for example taxation and spending levels or response to central government policy.⁵² But the Labour Group normally conformed to the policy acceptance rather than policy initiation or policy scrutiny modes identified by Gyford.⁵³ Later social media challenge provoked legal and police investigations into corruption in Sandwell in 2014–16. The resulting 'Wragge Report' identified one-party control and long-term individual tenures of senior member and officers in Sandwell; with 'inherent knowledge' taken for granted in a corrosive governance culture marked by a lack of contestability. This featured 'oppressive' member interference in specific housing allocations, even though this function was formally undertaken by an arms-length body.⁵⁴

⁵¹ 'Suspended answer critics', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 18 February 1982; 'Moderates in the chair', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 27 May 1982; 'Party rebels set to return', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 17 June 1982; 'Left claims witch hunt', *News Telephone*, 16 May 1985. Suspension was from the Labour Group and could lead to being barred as a Labour election candidate. Deselection refers to the dropping of a sitting Labour councillor by the ward party as its candidate in the forthcoming election.

⁵² See 'Labour split in rates storm', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 4 February 1982; John Edwards, 'The Public Sector Crisis in Sandwell', [political paper], 1982; Fred Smith, 'The Public Sector Crisis in Sandwell: A reply', [political paper], 1982; John Edwards, 'Sandwell: The town that lost its way', *Chartist*, October/November 1987. Edwards and Smith were Sandwell Labour councillors.

⁵³ John Gyford, *Local Politics in Britain* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), 136-7 cited in David G. Green, *Power and Party in an English city: An account of single-party rule* (2nd edn.; London: Routledge, 2007), 49. Also see John Gyford, *The Politics of Local Socialism* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1985), 9.

⁵⁴ Gowling WLG (formerly Wragge & Co), 'Report to the Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Chief Financial Officer of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council', [consultancy report], 2016, 1, 6, 11. The council appointed this external review in October 2014, which concluded in April 2016 after this thesis was submitted for examination. The majority of findings were supported in a separate legal review: James Goudie QC, 'Project Osprey—Opinion: Legal Services, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council', [legal report], 2016. Both reports were published in May 2016, despite High Court challenge by an individual councillor and by the determined blocking efforts of nearly half the Sandwell Labour Group. These reports can be viewed at: Sandwell MBC, 'Publication of reports into land sales and other matters', [government website], <http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/news/article/3725/publication_of_reports_into_land_sales_and_other_matters>, accessed 20 May 2016. A sample of the local press coverage can be seen at: 'Powerful Oldbury councillor facing new allegations', *Halesowen News*, 18 December 2014; 'Breaking News: New delay for publication of Wragge Report into alleged Sandwell Council corruption', *Halesowen News*, 13 May 2016; 'Top Sandwell Council officer bullied by former deputy leader Cllr Mahboob Hussain in dodgy land deals—Wragge Report reveals', *Halesowen News*, 18 May 2016; 'Wragge Report reveals shocking Sandwell Council land deals—but former deputy leader says he is the victim of a "witch hunt"', *Express & Star*, 20 May 2016; 'COMMENT: Findings of Wragge Report are shocking', *Express & Star*, 21 May 2016.

The adverse Audit Commission report mentioned earlier caused political disquiet, but the designation of the Black Country Development Corporation (BCDC) in 1987 was an exogenous shock that precipitated a leadership change. This was followed by a 'realignment' of factional alliances in the Labour Group, although elite control was maintained. This disruption was shaped by central government intervention, but it unlocked an intense period of internal restructuring:

The creation of a chief executive post, the beginnings of a community development approach and tenant and resident consultation, the decentralisation of some (especially housing) service delivery, a growing acceptance that [...] 'the actual quality of housing' [...] mattered, a reorganisation of the secondary education sector, a new policy emphasis on economic development, a more sustained attempt at the implementation of corporate structures and mechanisms, some extension of delegated powers to committees and officers, and the creation of a new Community Development and Urban Policy Committee along with other committee reforms.⁵⁵

Financial pressures (notably due to the poll tax) led to the crisis-management of spending cuts. Politically the 'realignment' proved unstable: in 1992 there was a partial restoration of the pre-1987 leadership. But the new institutional policy direction was retained, particularly in the areas of regeneration and housing; with a new focus on partnership working.⁵⁶ Thus 1987–92 was a 'critical conjuncture'.⁵⁷ Its legacy is discussed in later sections.

To conclude this section, Smethwick, curiously overlooked by Birmingham, was after a few decades consolidated into a new local government entity for part of the fissiparous Black Country. Local government reorganisations rendered historic place identities otiose, just as deindustrialisation and housing failure undermined place function.⁵⁸ These negative drivers and organisational inadequacy defined the earlier years of Sandwell. Municipal labourism was the persistent characteristic, at both political and officer level, in a starkly

⁵⁵ Valler and Betteley, 'Local Policy', 2401.

⁵⁶ Valler and Betteley, 'Local Policy', 2399, 2401.

⁵⁷ For a fuller discussion of this concept see Chapter 2 and Mahoney, 'Path Dependence', 527-8.

⁵⁸ Nevin, 'Interviews'.

one-party environment. It explains the forces of inertia punctuated by crisis, particularly in the 1987–92 ‘conjuncture’; the closed political relations around town-based cliques; the privileging of professional producer interests and strong trade unions; and eventual political corruption.⁵⁹ This militated against a coherent place-based approach, with long-term, strategic priorities for housing and later, regeneration; and the wider community relationships and local partnerships this required.

4.2 Governance Culture, Housing and the 'Politics of Support'

A long-term populist dimension to the issue of housing demand illustrated how municipal labourism informed the management of decline, and how this interacted with community engagement. The provision and management of public housing is a feature of subsequent sections and Chapter 5, but the varied and apparently contradictory aspects of wider housing policy, housing stress and the ‘politics of support’ require a temporal analysis to identify the underlying continuity.⁶⁰

While a ‘big’ issue, housing redevelopment with flats was uncontroversial until the late 1960s.⁶¹ Davis identified ‘the strong political imperative from 1945; everybody was signed-up to that because they knew how bad the housing was’.⁶² Smethwick Corporation

⁵⁹ ‘Council strike—still deadlock’, *Smethwick News Telephone*, 18 March 1982.

⁶⁰ Joel Rast, ‘Why History (Still) Matters: Time and temporality in urban political analysis’, *Urban Affairs Review*, 48/1 (2012), 3–36, 24.

⁶¹ Harris, ‘Interview’.

⁶² Philip Davis, ‘Interview with Author’, 28 June 2013. Davis grew up in Black Patch as the son of Soho Labour councillor Ron Davis and was very active in the Labour Party in the Warley Council era. A 1967 Labour Party election leaflet promised: ‘Labour policy for Warley . . . housing programme to be stepped up – 2,000 homes to be completed by May 1968: ‘Soho Ward Warley County Borough Elections Thursday May 11: Davis for Soho’, [election address], 1967. While under Conservative control after 1967 Warley Council published a report, ‘4,000 Houses in 4 years’: Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, ‘Smethwick’, 95.

was Labour from 1945 until 1964, when the Conservatives took control; not over housing but through campaigning against significant recent immigration.⁶³ Short-lived Conservative capture of the Smethwick parliamentary seat in the 1964 general election, described as a 'national scandal', nevertheless contributed to further immigration control under the Wilson government.⁶⁴ Tory local election pledges covered standard themes including housing, but with the coded call to 'clean up Smethwick' (Figure 4.3). Contemporary accounts highlight the opportunism as well as the racism of the Tory approach, although Labour was also conflicted in Smethwick on the immigration issue.⁶⁵

The Tories had 'played the race card', but to what practical purpose locally, in Smethwick? Prominent in their leaflets was the strapline: 'Your Vote will make this certain'. They had to react to resident concern about the rapid ethnic shift in Marshall Street (Chapter 3). The council identified two properties in Marshall Street it wished to buy in order to sell or let to 'whites only'.⁶⁶ The council applied to central government for permission to borrow the purchase cost of the two houses.⁶⁷ This was emphatically refused by Crossman, the housing minister.⁶⁸ It was unworkable to buy them through the rates and the idea was dropped. Before this decision, the Tories encountered similar pressure from

⁶³ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 120.

⁶⁴ Robert Pearce, 'Walker, Patrick Chrestien Gordon, Baron Gordon-Walker (1907–1980), Politician and Author', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/printable/31161>>, accessed 8 September 2013. The Smethwick seat was regained by Labour in the 1966 general election. The Commonwealth Immigrants Act was passed in 1968: Asif Afridi and Joy Warmington, 'The Pied Piper: The BME third sector and UK race relations policy', [academic study], Birmingham: Brap, 2009, 16.

⁶⁵ See Special Note 22: The 1964 Parliamentary Election in Smethwick.

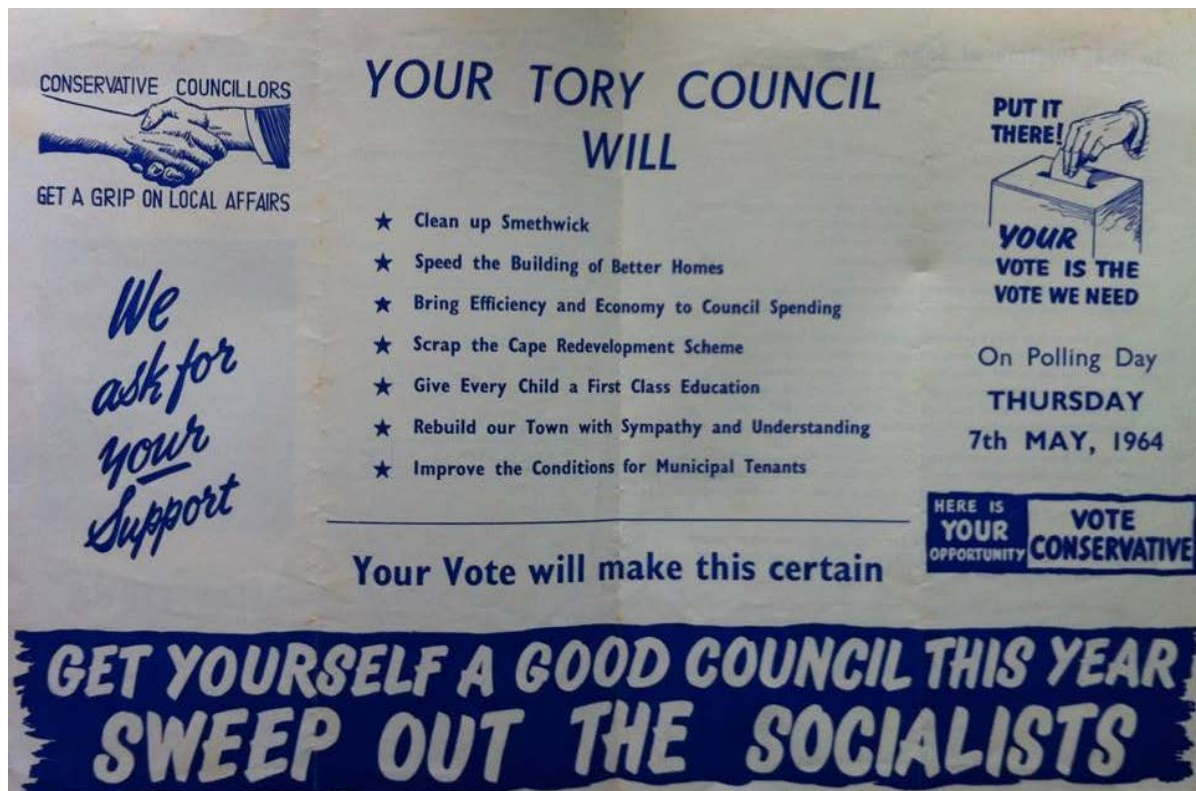
⁶⁶ In practice, the strict date order waiting list system and ten-year residential qualification effectively confined council housing allocations to white people, unless BME applicants were rehoused through clearance. This policy was agreed under Labour control in 1960 and confirmed in 1961: Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', [council report], Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, [1920–66], Minute 18193: 'Letting of Municipal Houses - Policy', meeting held on 15 August 1960; Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', Minute 18870: 'Lettings Policy', meeting held on 9 October 1961.

⁶⁷ 'White list clash', *Daily Mail*, 7 December 1964; 'All-white road plan starts', *Daily Mail*, 31 December 1964.

⁶⁸ 'Veto on Smethwick', *Daily Mail*, 18 March 1965; 'Minister in new Smethwick row', *Daily Mail*, 9 April 1965.

other streets to stop immigration. The Tory council leader exposed their futile political position when he said: 'You would have us buying-up half the town'.⁶⁹ An attempt to avoid letting a new tower block to 'coloured people' could not be sustained.⁷⁰ This outcome starkly revealed the tension between the politics of support and the politics of power.⁷¹ After 1968, Tory support in Smethwick entered secular decline, falling from 69 per cent of the popular vote to eight per cent by 2012 (Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.3: Conservative Smethwick local election leaflet, 1964



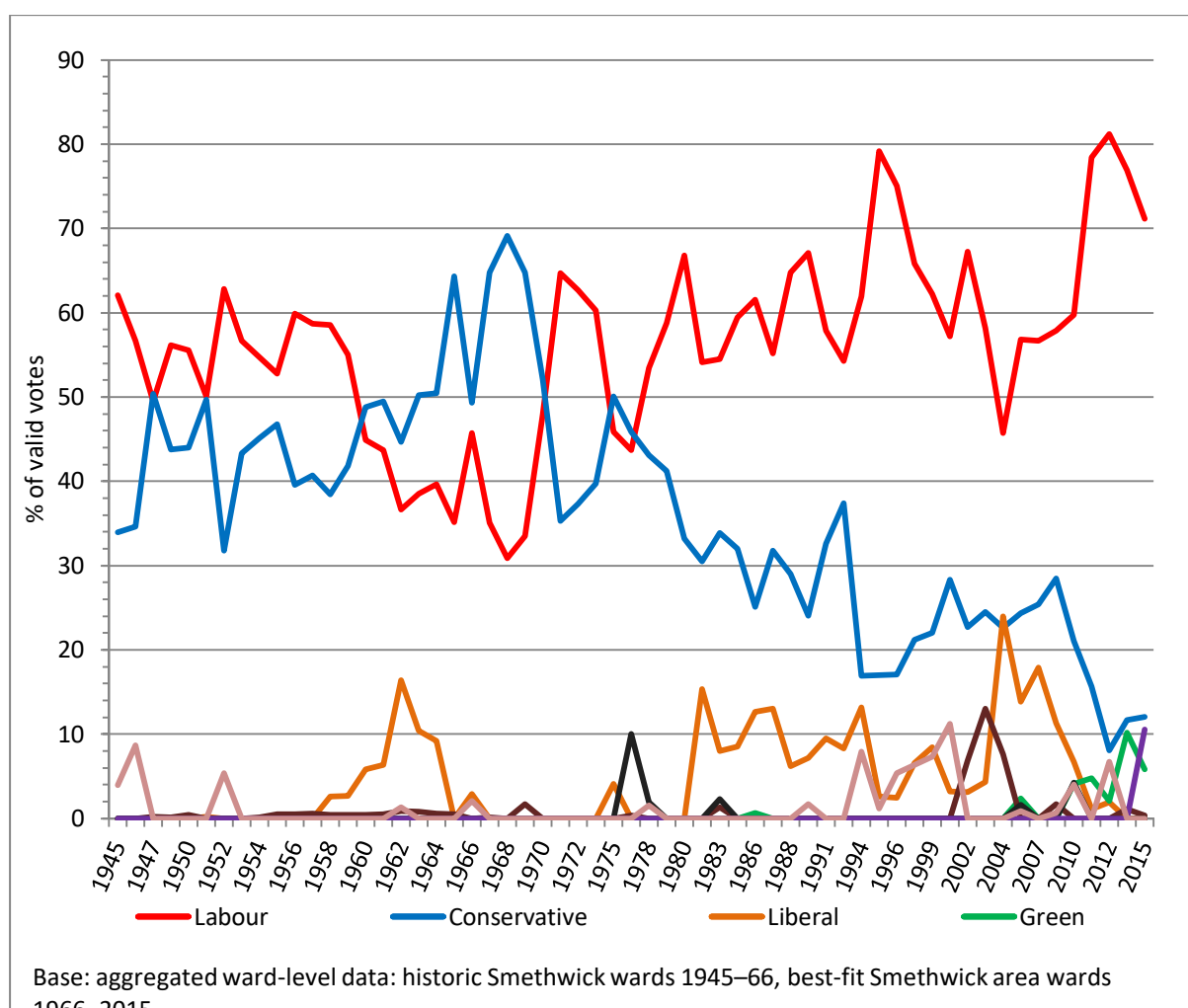
Source: 'Your Tory Council will . . . Your Vote will make this certain', [Election address], from C. E. A. Dickens, *Smethwick Municipal Elections, Thursday 7th May 1964: Alan Vernon, Your Conservative Candidate, Soho Ward*, Spread page. © Smethwick Conservative Association. Reproduced with permission of Alan Vernon, 2 July 2013. Also see Special Note 22: The 1964 Parliamentary Election in Smethwick.

⁶⁹ 'Can't buy up half the town, say Tories', *Smethwick Telephone*, 10 September 1964.

⁷⁰ 'Council flats for whites only', *Daily Mail*, 6 May 1965.

⁷¹ Hallam, 'Interview'. Also see Paul Foot, *Immigration and Race in British Politics* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), 76.

Figure 4.4: Smethwick Local Elections: Party share of the popular vote, 1945 to 2015



Source: See Special Note 19: Electoral Politics in Smethwick and Sandwell.

The events of 1964–66 profoundly influenced a generation of local politicians, with Sandwell in the forefront of promoting community cohesion since its pioneering community relations council in the 1970s.⁷² Spellar observed: ‘Smethwick is a more relaxed place, but it didn’t happen by accident’.⁷³ It was underpinned by investment in community

⁷² ‘Ahead of Scarman’, *Smethwick News Telephone*, 3 December 1981; Davis, ‘Interview’; Hallam, ‘Interview’; Bob Badham, ‘Interview with Author’, 11 July 2013. Badham was a Sandwell Labour councillor for 38 years who represented Sandwell/St Pauls wards in Smethwick in 1976–83.

⁷³ John Spellar, ‘Interview with Author’, 21 June 2013. Spellar was MP for Warley after 1997. In 2008, 70 per cent of those surveyed in Smethwick agreed ‘that your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together’. This was the highest level among the six towns: Sandwell MBC, ‘Sandwell Council Place Survey 2008’, [statistical report], 2008, Table 331.

infrastructure, developing community leadership, strong inter-faith and third sector dialogue, linking activity by councillors and effective police engagement.⁷⁴ This approach ran alongside demographic shifts and reduced housing shortages, the corollary of which was the eventual low demand for public housing.

The impact of low demand in places like Windmill Lane is examined later, but relevant here was the Housing Action Trust (HAT) announcement in Sandwell in 1988. Nevin described a sense of betrayal among officers when estate-level data shared with the Department of the Environment (DoE) locally was used to designate Sandwell nationally.⁷⁵ Planning powers intended for the HAT alarmed them.⁷⁶ Councillors barred any cooperation with DoE.⁷⁷ Young argued: 'we incited the community, quite inappropriately actually, to fight against the HAT'.⁷⁸ The council's survey reported '85 per cent of tenants said they were opposed to a Housing Action Trust being imposed on them'.⁷⁹ This may have reflected

⁷⁴ Spellar, 'Interview'; John Garrett, 'Interview with Author', 24 June 2013; Gurinder Singh Josan, 'Interview with Author', 3 July 2013; Johur Uddin, 'Interview with Author', 10 July 2013; Chris Khamis, 'Interviews with Author', 6 November 2013, 4 February 2014 and 3 March 2016. Garrett was a social worker in Smethwick in the 1980s and later Deputy Chief Executive of Sandwell MBC. Josan was a Sandwell Labour councillor for St Pauls ward in Smethwick from 2002-10. Uddin was Chief Executive of Community Connect Foundation, which operated from the North Smethwick Resource Centre. Khamis was a fellow director of CSR Partnership with the author who particularly worked with the Smethwick Regeneration Partnership.

⁷⁵ Brendan Nevin, Patrick Loftman, and Alan Middleton, 'The Black Country Development Corporation and the Sandwell Housing Action Trust: An impact assessment of central government initiatives on the local urban policy frame', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Birmingham Polytechnic, Faculty of the Built Environment, 1991, 115; Nevin, 'Interviews'.

⁷⁶ Sandwell MBC, 'Minutes of the Land and Town Planning Committee', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, [1974-90], Minute 193/88: 'Housing Action Trusts: Implications for Planning Policies', meeting held on 4 August 1988. The UDC and HAT together would have covered 15 per cent of residential property and 35 per cent of Sandwell's land area and leaving it with three planning authorities: Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'BCDC and HAT', 20.

⁷⁷ Sandwell MBC, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, [1974-90], Minute 206/88: 'Proposed Designation of Housing Action Trusts', meeting held on 6 July 1988. See reply to Nicholas Ridley by Councillor John Edwards: 'Why we won't wear HATs', *Express & Star*, 9 September 1988.

⁷⁸ Young, 'Interviews'.

⁷⁹ PROBE, 'Windmill Lane and Lion Farm: Regeneration proposals', [consultancy report], n.p.: PROBE, 1989, 37.

a loaded survey question, but the strength of feeling against the HAT was very evident.⁸⁰

The local press was dominated by references to 'estates earmarked for confiscation'; 'sell-off to private landlords'; 'massive rent rises'; 'constant fear of eviction'; and 'fewer repairs'.⁸¹ In response, the Environment Secretary promised tenant representation on the HAT Board, but did not offer a prior ballot or clear right of return to a council tenancy at the end of the HAT.⁸² Debate focussed on tenancy issues, but not the physical and social problems of the estates and their unlettability.

Sandwell's later strategic response to low demand was to transfer 8,500 homes in several areas to a new local housing company under the Estates Renewal Challenge Fund (ERCF).⁸³ The proposal was rejected in a ballot of tenants in 1997. As previously at Windmill Lane and Lion Farm, a survey found high satisfaction with repairs and existing landlord services.⁸⁴ The trade unions again actively opposed stock transfer; the bulk of the Labour Group meanwhile withheld active support.⁸⁵ With a fear of privatisation, the comparison

⁸⁰ For example see: 'Home is not where Mr Ridley says it should be', *Guardian*, 20 July 1988. This was a letter to the editor from the author's father Kevin Carey, a Windmill Lane resident.

⁸¹ 'Housing takeover "a threat to jobs"', *Express & Star*, 8 August 1988; 'Leaflet on takeover "misleading"—Minister raps union', *News Telephone*, 11 August 1988; 'Developers in queue to raze estate', *Express & Star*, 11 August 1988; 'Anger at housing shake-up scheme', *Express & Star*, 16 August 1988; 'Tenants in fear of takeover plan', *Halesowen News*, 18 August 1988; 'Hotline plan to deal with tenants' fears', *Express & Star*, 20 August 1988; 'Council in link-up to foil homes "takeover"', *Express & Star*, 23 August 1988; '"Takeover" team in for rough ride', *Express & Star*, 24 August 1988; 'Tenants are told to fight new deal', *Express & Star*, 3 September 1988; 'Team to study sell-off estates', *Express & Star*, 6 September 1988; 'Battle set over sell-off', *News Telephone*, 8 September 1988; 'Tenants boycott urged by council', *Birmingham Evening Mail*, 15 September 1988; 'Fury over tenants' quiz move', *Express & Star*, 15 September 1988; 'Tenants in demo over sell-off plan', *Express & Star*, 21 September 1988.

⁸² 'HATs off to housing plan', *Express & Star*, 9 September 1988. Also see Steven Tiesdell, 'A Forgotten Policy? A Perspective on the Evolution and Transformation of Housing Action Trust Policy 1987–99', *International Journal of Housing Policy*, 1/3 (2001), 357–83, 366–7.

⁸³ Only part of Smethwick, Bristnall was included in the ERCF areas—see Figure 4.16.

⁸⁴ Brendan Nevin, 'Local Housing Companies: Progress and problems', [academic study], York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1999, 23–4.

⁸⁵ Unison Sandwell General Branch, 'Our History: A brief history of campaigning', [information website], <<http://www.sandwellunison.co.uk/our-history/>>, accessed 10 May 2015; Lucas, 'Interview'.

with the HAT episode was unmistakable.⁸⁶ Nonetheless, this left the targeted estates with a £100m investment shortfall.⁸⁷ By 2002, only 29 per cent of the council stock met the national 'decent homes' standard due to the state of repair.⁸⁸

After the ERCF reverse, the local authority concluded it was highly unlikely that a ballot result in favour of stock transfer could be achieved.⁸⁹ When Sandwell subsequently pursued the alternative arms-length management organisation (ALMO) option it did not ballot tenants, although it did consult extensively; and the trade unions called off strike action once TUPE conditions were secured.⁹⁰ The management of two estates was similarly transferred without ballot to a housing association in 2006 under a 25-year Private Finance Initiative (PFI) deal.⁹¹ The ALMO ran from 2004 until 2012 when the council ended its operating agreement early, following an independently-led consultation but no ballot.⁹²

⁸⁶ Young, 'Interviews'.

⁸⁷ Nevin, 'Local Housing Companies', 23-4.

⁸⁸ Sandwell MBC, 'Expression of Interest (EOI) to ODPM: Arms-Length Management Organisation (ALMO)', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2003, 3. The Decent Homes Standard is a programme aimed at improving council and housing association homes to bring them all up to a minimum standard, where a property home must: meet the HHSRS minimum safety standards for housing; be in a reasonable state of repair; have reasonably modern facilities and services; and have efficient heating and effective insulation. Improvement activity to meet this standard was undertaken by Sandwell Homes, the arms-length management organisation.

⁸⁹ Sandwell MBC, 'ALMO Expression of Interest', 1.

⁹⁰ Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) legally protects employees whose business is being transferred to another business. See 'Councils sidestep ALMO ballots following "no" vote', *Inside Housing*, 13 May 2004; Sandwell MBC, 'ALMO Expression of Interest', 5; Unison Sandwell General Branch, 'Our History: A brief history of campaigning'.

⁹¹ Sandwell MBC, 'Wednesbury South Housing Renewal Area Private Finance Initiative—Contract Award: Report to Cabinet, 14 December 2005', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2005; Riverside, 'Managed Services: Hawthorn Fields', [corporate website], <<http://www.riverside.org.uk/your-neighbourhood/case-studies-communities/hawthorn-fields/>>, accessed 30 December 2015. Also see Stuart Hodgkinson, 'The Private Finance Initiative in English Council Housing Regeneration: A privatisation too far?', *Housing Studies*, 26/6 (2011), 911–32, 922.

⁹² 'Bright future for council tenants', *Sandwell Herald*, Autumn 2012, 11. Sandwell Homes' decent homes programme attracted £291.3m Government funding up to 2011: Sandwell Homes, 'Sandwell Homes Business Plan, 2011–2016', [corporate document], West Bromwich: Sandwell Homes, 2011, 13. Sandwell MBC announced a ten-year, £490m investment programme when stock returned from the ALMO: 'Sandwell Housing Investment Programme', *Homelife*, Spring 2013. Cuts in further decent homes funding and the advent of housing revenue account (HRA) self-financing options prompted the return to the council: DWA, 'The Future

While low demand and system-build legacies dominated the 1990s, renewed housing shortages in the next decades shaped the council's approach to the politics of support. As seen, renewed immigration was a structural driver. By 2002, Sandwell had 3,760 asylum seekers, with 54 per cent located in Smethwick. A council report identifying the regeneration potential of asylum seekers and refugees cited Sandwell's declining population and skill shortages.⁹³ The National Asylum Seeker Service (NASS) placement contract for 2001–06 pledged 230 otherwise difficult-to-let flats, maisonettes and townhouses. Most of these were in Soho and Victoria ward, which by 2002 had already absorbed 94 per cent of emergency placements.⁹⁴ This led to pressure on wider services and public concern.⁹⁵

Despite its continued local control even with a Labour government after 1997, Labour faced a significant challenge from the British National Party, especially in Tipton. It avoided Smethwick, but in 2003 its candidates secured an average 33.4 per cent of the vote where they stood.⁹⁶ By 2006 the BNP held four council seats, although it shortly lost them all. With this background, Sandwell decided in 2006 not to enter a fresh NASS contract. A

for Housing Management Services in Sandwell: Independent tenant advisor report into tenant opinion', [consultancy report], 2012, 1. Also Aynols Reid, 'Interview with Author', 13 February 2014. Reid was a Windmill Lane resident active in 'Friends and Neighbours', former ALMO board member and a former chair of Cape Hill and Windmill Area Sure Start.

⁹³ Sandwell MBC, 'Overview Report on Asylum Seekers (Forward Plan Ref. No. SI007): Report to the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Health, 14 November 2002', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2002.

⁹⁴ Sandwell MBC, 'Asylum Seekers'.

⁹⁵ 'Minister's ban on asylum seekers at his "surgeries"', *Daily Mail*, 26 February 2003.

⁹⁶ Adam Carey, 'Politics in Sandwell 1979 to 2010 and Futures: Implications for the Labour Group', [political paper], 2010. Also see SN 19: Electoral Politics.

report noted a political decision in 2004 to reduce volumes by 50 per cent had undermined the financial viability of contracts.⁹⁷

In a throwback to Labour's 1961 Smethwick policy, Sandwell in 2013 restricted council housing eligibility to those with 'a local connection to Sandwell', based on five years' residency.⁹⁸ It also introduced residency criteria when local authorities were obliged to establish local schemes to replace national Council Tax Benefit arrangements. The council faced a £3.2m shortfall in funding, but also acted to prevent Sandwell attracting people displaced from high-cost areas of London and the south-east by welfare cuts.⁹⁹ Avoiding a requirement to rehouse homeless and low-income people from Birmingham was reportedly an additional factor, although inflow continued into the growing private rented sector.¹⁰⁰ In 2014, the council was found to have acted illegally following a judicial review.¹⁰¹ In 2015, it announced Syrian refugees would not be offered council accommodation in Sandwell.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ Sandwell MBC, 'National Asylum Seeker Support (NASS) 2005 Accommodation Contract (West Midlands Consortium): Report to the Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Health, 16th May', [council report], 2006.

⁹⁸ To be a 'qualifying person' under the 2013 policy, applicants needed to demonstrate a local connection to Sandwell defined as: 'Applicants have lived in the Borough of Sandwell for at least 5 years continuously or that they have a close family member that has lived in Sandwell for 5 years continuously': Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Allocations Policy—Effective from 17.04.13', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2013, 6, 46.

⁹⁹ 'Sandwell prepares for the invasion of the Cockney benefit snatchers', *Halesowen News*, 6 December 2012.

¹⁰⁰ Anonymised interview comment. Tribal, 'Research into the Private Rented Sector within the Urban Living Pathfinder HMRA: Draft Report', [consultancy report], Edinburgh: Tribal Group, 2007, 24.

¹⁰¹ Rather than discouraging 'incomers' from the south-east, however, the court heard that the policy seemed to mainly affect people born in Sandwell with strong family connections there, while also discriminating against local women affected by domestic violence. In addition, the judge ruled the policy was irrational, discriminatory on grounds of race and gender; that Sandwell had neglected to carry out proper public consultation before it introduced the ruling; and ignored its equality duties: 'Local authority's "benefit tourism" rule discriminated against residents', *Guardian*, 30 July 2014.

¹⁰² 'Sandwell Council will not provide housing for Syrian refugees', *BBC News: Birmingham and the Black Country* [Local news website], (updated 23 October 2015) <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-34616404>>, accessed 26 February 2016.

The political culture also shaped the provision of new housing. The officer-led 2004 Sandwell Plan had aimed ‘to transform the area so that the “most successful” and most able to move, decide to stay, or choose to live, in the borough’.¹⁰³ The new leader from 2010 reportedly said to an officer: ‘my vision for Sandwell is that it will be the best Labour-led local authority for looking after its own people.’ This was judged to mean: ‘He wants it to be great, but to be great in his terms, which is good schools, good parks, and decent but affordable homes. That’s where we are now - not the dreamy stuff we were writing for the Sandwell Plan’.¹⁰⁴ As affordability pressures mounted, the mixed-income approach of the Sandwell Plan was largely dropped for new-build with a high social housing component.¹⁰⁵ One person interviewed described this approach as ‘catering to the existing poor’.¹⁰⁶ This legitimate new-build objective was linked to the more problematic steps to discourage inflow in Sandwell discussed earlier.

To conclude this section, the uncomfortable parallel of the 1964–66 and 2004–15 periods is the strategic challenge of managing places undergoing rapid immigration, and facing housing shortages. The interval between saw the force of public landlordism used to fend-off the government’s HAT. When the council’s own stock transfer was thwarted by such mentalities, further tenant ballots were avoided. Population growth prompted

¹⁰³ Sandwell MBC, ‘The Sandwell Plan 2003 (Forward Plan Ref No. R030): Report to Council, 28 October 2003’, [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2003, para 8.2. This was similar to a 1974 sentiment: ‘It is recognised that considerable efforts will be necessary if Warley’s residential environment is to be lifted to a standard whereby it is satisfactory to people from higher income/socio-economic groups. Otherwise the present state of affairs will continue and Warley will remain the home of the least mobile’: Warley Corporation, ‘Written Statement’, [council report], *Warley Structure Plan*, Smethwick: Warley Corporation, 1974, 80.

¹⁰⁴ Anonymised comment. The council website in 2015 retained the ‘Great People, Great Place, Great Prospects’ strapline of the 2008 Plan: see <http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/scorecard> and Sandwell Partnership, ‘The Sandwell Plan 2008’, [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2008.

¹⁰⁵ Sandwell MBC, ‘Affordability of Housing 2008—Briefing Note’, [statistical report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, Research Sandwell, 2008, 8; Sandwell Homes, ‘Business Plan’, 11.

¹⁰⁶ Anonymised interview comment.

housing allocation policy and new-build programmes explicitly catering to the existing population. As discussed earlier, practice extended to undue political involvement in specific lettings. So in one housing-based assessment of this period, 'it was about social control and political support'.¹⁰⁷ Originally motivated to create the local welfare state, this culture also featured a long-term political commitment to strong community interaction; and investment in third sector infrastructure. It nevertheless underlines the political dimension to system-build, housing management and regeneration.

4.3 Planning Policy and Housing Redevelopment in Smethwick and Warley

As Davis observed: 'One of the crucial things about Smethwick is the way it was physically transformed. Housing was the leitmotif of what happened to Smethwick, good and bad'.¹⁰⁸ As elsewhere, clearance was propelled by vested interests, including political parties, environmental health officers, planners and architects, resulting in a 20-year programme in Windmill Lane spanning three local authorities and alternating political control. But population decline meanwhile accelerated in Smethwick.¹⁰⁹ This section identifies the legacy of housing oversupply and estate unpopularity.

¹⁰⁷ Nevin, 'Interviews'.

¹⁰⁸ Davis, 'Interview'.

¹⁰⁹ Sandwell MBC, 'Falling Rolls in Secondary Schools—Smethwick Area: Report to Schools Sub-Committee, 10 March 1982', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 1982.

In Smethwick, as nationally, efforts to address housing problems predated the development of strategic planning policy. The worst forms of back-to-back housing were less prevalent in Smethwick than in central Birmingham and were removed or converted in a major redevelopment drive in 1933–5.¹¹⁰ The building of council houses began in 1920 with some 4,759 completed by the outbreak of war, mostly on land purchased in the expanded Borough.¹¹¹ As seen, the postwar *Conurbation Study* found 6,000 homes in need of replacement in Smethwick (Figure 4.5).¹¹² Vernon remembered childhood Woodland Street: ‘Still sharing a toilet with three other families in a backyard; the water still carried up a well. There was still gas lighting in the living room. No electricity until I was nine or ten’.¹¹³ In 1961 the council reported a waiting list of 7,300 people to be housed.¹¹⁴ These conditions generated local political pressure to address overcrowding and unfitness through slum clearance and redevelopment.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, ‘Smethwick’, 121.

¹¹¹ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, ‘Smethwick’, 121. See excellent full-page article on the first council housing in Smethwick and Oldbury: ‘We found the land . . . and built the houses’, *Smethwick News Telephone*, 29 November 1979.

¹¹² West Midland Group, ‘*Conurbation Study*’, 91.

¹¹³ Alan Vernon, ‘Interview with Author’, 2 July 2013. Vernon was a Conservative councillor for Soho ward on Smethwick Council in 1964–66.

¹¹⁴ ‘Planners’ Aim—No slums in a generation, c.1961’, [Black and white page article—spread placed by Smethwick Corporation], from Gary Robinson, *Race Relations in Smethwick*, 1962, [analysis of local newspaper articles by Jewish Youth Club, Manchester]. Reproduced with permission of Sandwell Community Histories and Archives Service: Ian Gray, 7 March 2016, reproduced in Gary Robinson, ‘Race Relations in Smethwick’, [analysis of local newspaper articles], Manchester: Jewish Youth Club, 1962.

¹¹⁵ ‘Family of six in one small room—“Other cases equally as bad”’, *Daily Mail*, 2 August 1954; Badham, ‘Interview’. Also see ‘2,500 more council homes in 5 years’, *Smethwick Telephone and Warley Courier*, 12 February 1965.

The postwar approach to planning and housing was guided by the 1955 Smethwick Development Plan.¹¹⁶ Its programme reflected the restricted availability of land in the town and the limited opportunity to reduce population density. Most significantly, it originally anticipated a population of 73,000 in Smethwick in 1971 compared with 76,400 in 1951.¹¹⁷ The Government reduced the 1971 population forecast to 70,000 when it approved the plan; a level retained when the plan was amended in 1960 to cover a further 15 years.¹¹⁸ The original development plan estimated a council new-build requirement of 5,000 units 'by the provision of multi-storey buildings'.¹¹⁹ Activity was to be concentrated in four redevelopment areas containing 30 per cent of Smethwick's population, with 2,500 people also housed in 'overspill' estates outside the town.¹²⁰

The plan heralded the comprehensive redevelopment of 'slum' housing areas, commencing in Windmill Lane. In 1955–85 an estimated 6,050 private houses were demolished in Smethwick (Figure 4.5).¹²¹ This removed 28 per cent of the original stock: below Salford, but well above the English urban average of 22 per cent (Chapter 2). Successive redevelopment areas were declared along with compulsory purchase orders, including 'not-unfit' housing, to create 'convenient' sites. There was no consultation on the

¹¹⁶ Smethwick Corporation, 'Written Statement', [council report], *County Borough of Smethwick Development Plan*, Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1955. See SN 23: Smethwick Development Plan and 'overspill' housing.

¹¹⁷ Smethwick Corporation, 'The Survey and Written Analysis', [council report], *County Borough of Smethwick Development Plan*, Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1951, 1, 7. Also see SN 23: Smethwick Development Plan and 'overspill' housing.

¹¹⁸ 'Development Plan', *Smethwick Civic News*, July 1955; Smethwick Corporation, 'Written Statement Amendment No. (196)', [council report], *County Borough of Smethwick Development Plan*, Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1960, 2.

¹¹⁹ Smethwick Corporation, 'Survey and Written Analysis', 6.

¹²⁰ Smethwick Corporation, 'Written Statement', 7.

¹²¹ Also see Table 6.1 in Chapter 6.

clearance proposals.¹²² The national literature identified subjective social grading judgments made by postwar medical health officers undertaking property assessments. In a reflection of the municipal labourist culture locally, their authority was described as 'absolute' by Parish.¹²³ Later, more objective clearance considerations included solid walls, inadequate heating, shared drainage and steep stairs; and poor amenity, such as undue proximity to neighbours and parking problems.¹²⁴ The national shift from clearance to refurbishment in the early 1970s saw the adoption of area-based improvement schemes in Warley alongside further clearance, an approach which continued in Sandwell (later Figure 4.16).¹²⁵ But the 1,538 private demolitions undertaken in Smethwick from 1985–2011 was less than half the level originally planned for this period.¹²⁶

¹²² 'Slum clearance schemes', *Smethwick Civic News*, December 1958; 'Slum clearance part 1: The procedure for dealing with houses unfit for human habitation', *Smethwick Civic News*, July 1964; 'Slum clearance part 2: Compensation', *Smethwick Civic News*, August 1964. Also see Special Note 24: Housing Redevelopment and Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO).

¹²³ Doug Parish, 'Interview with Author', 16 December 2013. Parish was an environmental health officer at Sandwell from 1974, with responsibility for private sector clearance until 1996.

¹²⁴ Peter Tuck, 'Interview with Author', 16 December 2013. Tuck worked at Sandwell MBC from 1977 to 2010 as an environmental health and later private sector housing manager.

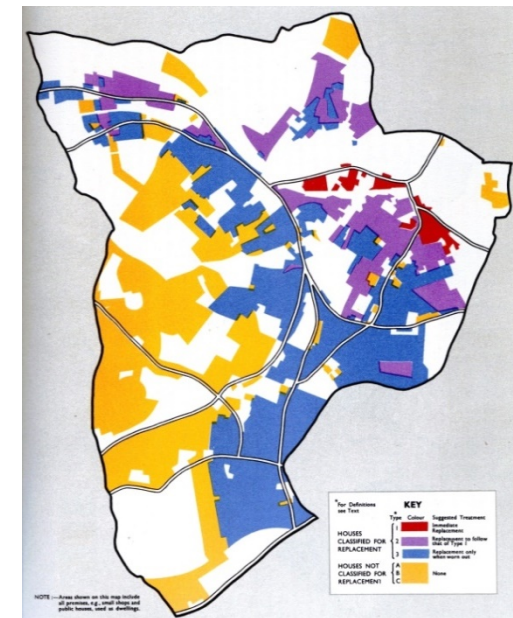
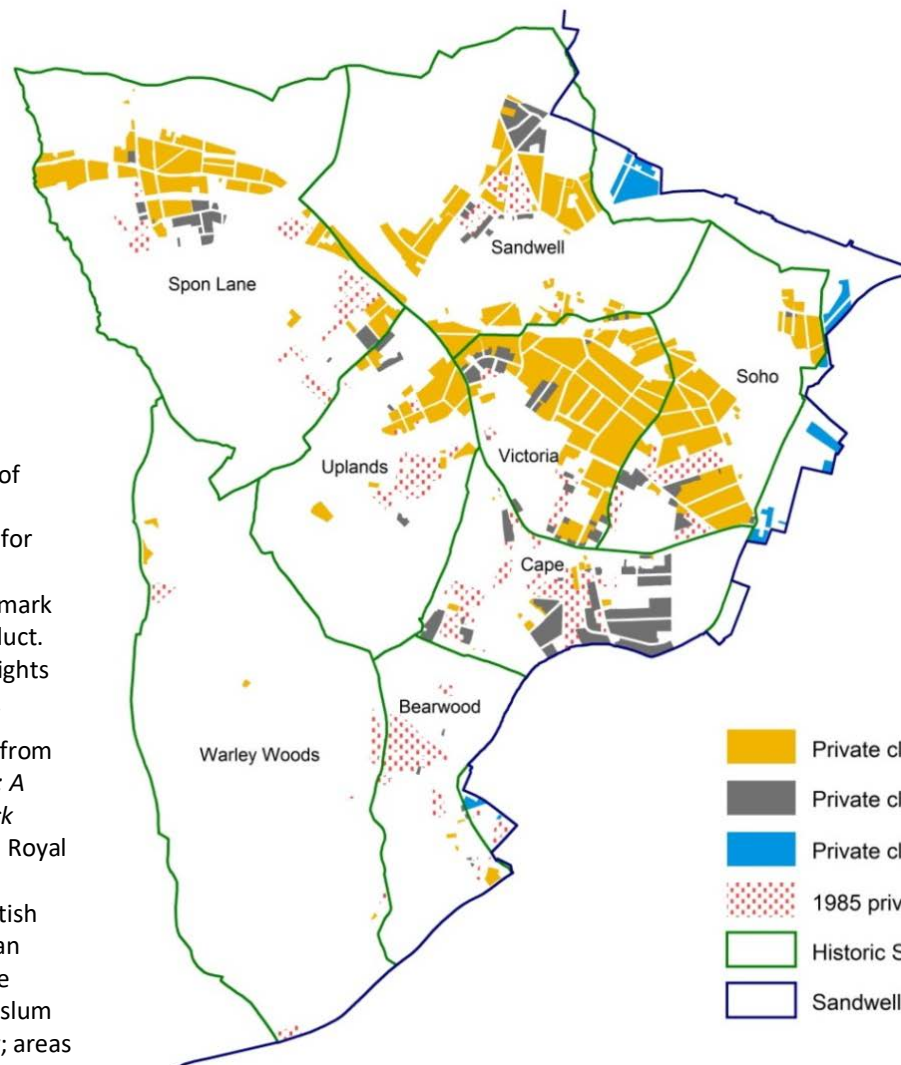
¹²⁵ By 1972, Warley had declared two general improvement areas (GIAs) in Smethwick with a further seven planned, covering 6,624 properties: Warley Corporation, 'Report of Survey: Housing', [council report], *Warley Structure Plan*, Smethwick: Warley Corporation, 1973, Table 10 General Improvement Areas. Between 1966 and 1972 it also made 2,501 individual improvement grants: Warley Corporation, 'Housing', 11.

¹²⁶ Tuck, 'Interview'. The 25-year plan adopted in 1985 envisaged private sector clearance in Smethwick of 3,711 units: Sandwell MBC, 'Unfit Housing Clearance Programme 1986 to 1992 (Plus Supplementary List): Report of the Director of Environmental Services', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 1985. Some 1,013 homes from this programme were actually cleared by 2011 (27.3 per cent). Another 525 homes not in the 1985 plan were also cleared in this period. See Special Note 25: Scale of Housing Clearance in Smethwick.

Figure 4.5: Planned and actual Private Sector Housing Clearance in Smethwick, 1951 to 2011

Source: See Special Note 25: Scale of Housing Clearance in Smethwick. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A Landmark Information Group Ltd/EDINA product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

Inset source: 'Housing', [Diagram], from West Midland Group, *Conurbation: A Survey of Birmingham and the Black Country*, 1948, Plate 5 after 160. © Royal Institute of British Architects. Reproduced with permission of British Architectural Library, RIBA: Jonathan Makepeace, 18 February 2016. The areas in red were deemed to be in slum condition in the *Conurbation Study*; areas in purple 'near-slum' and in need of replacement.



Housing condition in 1948

- Private clearance in Smethwick 1951-85
- Private clearance in Smethwick 1986-2011
- Private clearance in ex-Birmingham areas 1951-2011
- 1985 private clearance programme not cleared to 2011
- Historic Smethwick wards
- Sandwell

The 1961 census found Smethwick's population had fallen to 68,390; by then it had been declining for 30 years.¹²⁷ This was partly masked by the much smaller fall in household numbers due to reducing average household size—a dynamic not understood by planners in the 1950s.¹²⁸ By 1959, Smethwick Corporation had provided over 1,500 postwar dwellings, mainly its first two sites in Windmill Lane, with over 1,000 in the pipeline.¹²⁹ However, a review of the waiting list in 1961 revised demand down from 7,300 to 3,200.¹³⁰ A council press article blamed overspill municipal development for the loss of young married couples.¹³¹ The article noted: 'Already the borough schools are amalgamating because of the decrease in the child population. A borough of this size cannot allow this situation to continue'. Increasingly sharp demographic change implied managed decline, although by then it was obvious that Smethwick itself would be reorganised into a larger local authority.

The revised Smethwick Development Plan was duly made obsolete by local government reorganisation in 1966.¹³² Warley Council produced a structure plan at the end of its life, but no local plans.¹³³ The first Warley municipal new-build programme was therefore developed in the absence of a plan to guide clearance and build rates. Instead it reflected a political commitment to maintain the five-year programmes of the previous local

¹²⁷ See SN 5: Smethwick Population.

¹²⁸ David Donnison and Claire Ungerson, *Housing Policy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), 151. The total number of households in Smethwick fell by 962 (4.1 per cent) between 1951 and 1961 compared to a population fall of 8,017 (10.5 per cent)—see SN 5: Smethwick Population.

¹²⁹ Smethwick Corporation, 'Industrial Handbook (1959 edn.)', 34.

¹³⁰ What the council termed the 'really effective demand' (excluding slum clearance) was limited to 1,319 cases requiring fresh accommodation. The large majority of the waiting list was from people resident in the Borough (2,725): 'Housing register', *Smethwick Civic News*, December 1961; 'The Housing register', *Smethwick Civic News*, March 1962. This local component was equivalent to 12 per cent of 22,490 households in Smethwick—SN 5: Smethwick Population.

¹³¹ 'Planners' Aim—No slums in a generation, c.1961'.

¹³² See Special Note 27: The Warley Structure Plan.

¹³³ Warley Corporation, 'Warley Structure Plan', [council report], Smethwick: Warley Corporation, 1974.

authorities and to locate them proportionately.¹³⁴ This ringfence was unnecessary: with electoral rolls in the wards covering Smethwick falling by 6.7 per cent in 1966–69, the immediate trajectory of decline was plain to the new Warley councillors.¹³⁵ Certainly the density of the later Windmill Lane estates should have been lower. Instead, the continued housing programme in Smethwick ‘doomed the new estates to failure because the level of resupply was simply too high: there was nothing to sustain them’.¹³⁶ The population of Smethwick fell to c.59,700 by 1975, the point when 70,000 had been anticipated by the Smethwick planners.¹³⁷ The eventual Warley Structure Plan proved to be similarly flawed: its ‘most likely projection’ expected population growth to 1991 when instead it declined significantly due to continued outmigration.¹³⁸

Paradoxically, waiting lists remained high in the Warley and early Sandwell years.¹³⁹ This was principally because clearance activity also peaked in 1966–72 at 4,077 demolitions across Warley.¹⁴⁰ Although 5,055 homes were also built, some 2,204 households were

¹³⁴ The weakness of this approach is discussed in Special Note 26: Municipal Housing schemes in Warley.

¹³⁵ Warley Corporation, 'Members' Year Book', [council report], Smethwick: Warley Corporation, [1966/67 to 1973/74]. These volumes always included ward electorate totals.

¹³⁶ Nevin, 'Interviews'.

¹³⁷ See SN 23: Smethwick Development Plan and ‘overspill’ housing. The 59,700 figure is an interpolation of Census data for the 1971 (62,254) and 1981 (55,793) Smethwick population—see SN 5: Smethwick Population. Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

¹³⁸ Warley Corporation, 'Housing', Table 18 potential households 1971–91. Also see SN 27: Warley Structure Plan.

¹³⁹ The housing situation was described as one of ‘extreme urgency’ in a council report in 1966: Warley Corporation, 'County Borough of Warley: Minutes of the Housing Development Committee', [council report], Smethwick: Warley Corporation, [1966–74], Appendix A to Minute 243/66 (Housing Programme): meeting held on 7 November 1966. In 1967, the council noted: ‘There are well over 5,000 applicants on the waiting list requiring accommodation and, although this list is revised annually, the number continues to increase’: Warley Corporation, 'Warley Official Guide', [council report], Cheltenham: Ed. J. Burrow, 1967, 37. The waiting list was revised in 1968 and by 1972 had 4,521 applications: Warley Corporation, 'Housing', Table 19 housing waiting list January 1968 to November 1972.

¹⁴⁰ Warley Corporation, 'Housing', Table 7 dwellings demolished 1966–72.

rehoused from clearance.¹⁴¹ The small net stock increase meant the impact in reducing the waiting list was initially small; but once the clearance cohort was absorbed, depopulation and the growing unpopularity of the stock sharply reduced effective demand. In the meantime, what Dunleavy identified as a 'self-generating cycle of public authority activity' was underway (Chapter 2).¹⁴² Like elsewhere, early postwar new-build in Smethwick was overwhelmingly municipal (97 per cent).¹⁴³ Perhaps more surprisingly, there was no significant private new-build in Smethwick until 1988.¹⁴⁴

Smethwick Corporation ultimately built 3,687 dwellings in 1945–66, with 2,373 located in the Borough.¹⁴⁵ Warley built 2,246 in Smethwick, so that the eventual 4,619 total approached the original development plan for 5,000.¹⁴⁶ This activity was outweighed by clearance, so the total Smethwick housing stock in 1955–75 fell by 232 (1.1 per cent).¹⁴⁷ This happened in an area that lost 2,562 households (11.1 per cent) in the same period.¹⁴⁸ This resulted in rising housing vacancies during the 1970s, from 3.5 per cent to 5.7 per cent

¹⁴¹ Warley Corporation, 'Housing', Table 11 housing completions 1967–72; Table 21 rehousing from slum clearance area in local authority dwellings 1967–72.

¹⁴² Patrick Dunleavy, *The Politics of Mass Housing in Britain, 1945–1975: a study of corporate power and professional influence in the welfare state* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), 80.

¹⁴³ This was the second highest rate among English towns in 1945–58, although the median local authority build was high, at 72.5 per cent: Claus Moser and Wolf Scott, *British Towns: A statistical study of their social and economic differences* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1961), 138. Also see Special Note 1: Comparator areas to Smethwick and the selection of Salford.

¹⁴⁴ The only development beyond 1–2 plot sites was Broomfield/Green Street in Uplands, where 42 private dwellings were built in the early 1970s: Warley Corporation, 'Written Statement', 81.

¹⁴⁵ See SN 23: Smethwick Development Plan and 'overspill' housing.

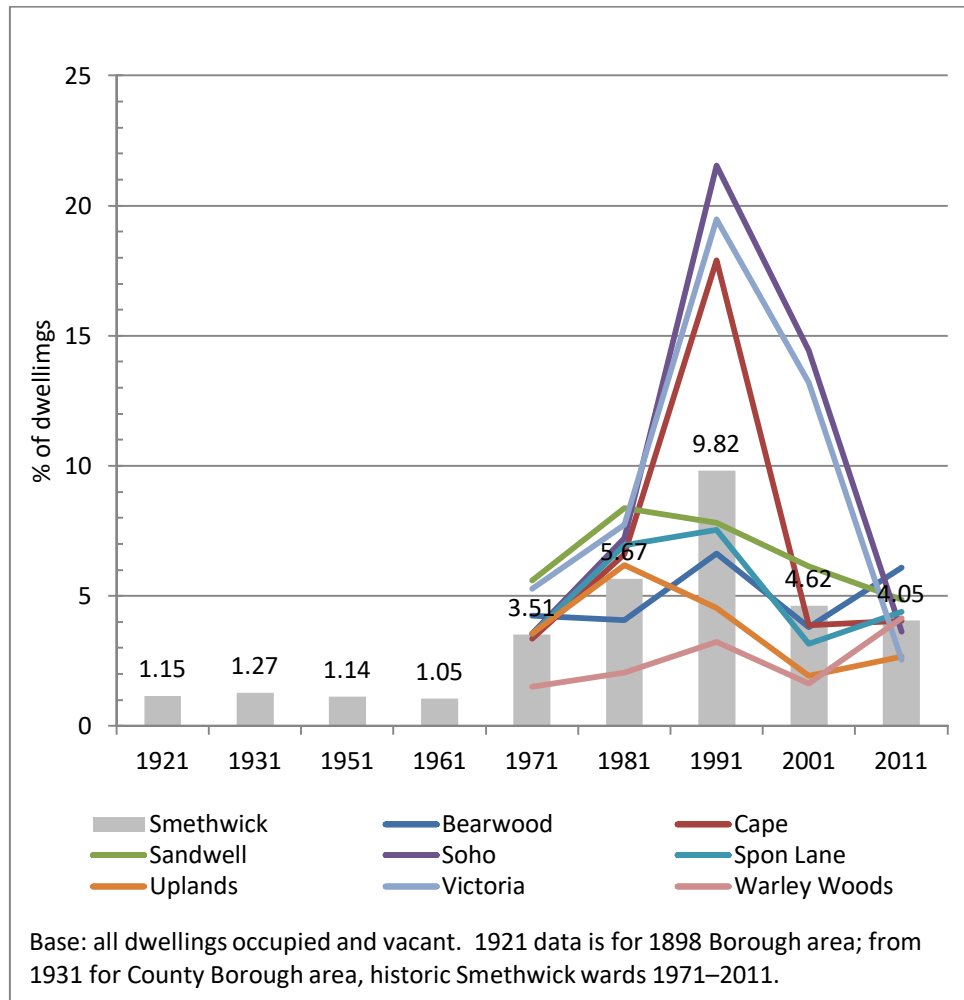
¹⁴⁶ The Warley build programme included West Smethwick, 849 units; Cape Hill Phases I–III, 867; Metric estate, 230; and Union Street, 300: data from GIS mapping.

¹⁴⁷ Estimated figure. The 1955 figure of 21,864 dwellings is an interpolation of stock figures given for 1954 (21,834) and 1956 (21,946) in Smethwick Corporation, 'Members' Year Book', [council report], Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, [1944/45 to 1965/66]. The 1975 dwelling figure of 21,632 is an interpolation of Census data for 1971 and 1981 respectively—see Special Note 6: Housing data for Smethwick. Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

¹⁴⁸ Estimated figure. The household figures for 1955 (23,067) and 1975 (20,505) are interpolated from Census data for 1951/61 and 1971/81 respectively—see SN 5: Smethwick Population. Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

in 1981. Voids reached 9.8 per cent by 1991, driven by collapsing demand in West Smethwick and Windmill Lane (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6: Housing Vacancy rate, Smethwick, 1921 to 2011



Source: Special Note 6: Housing data for Smethwick. Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

‘System-build’ construction of flats and maisonettes dominated the Warley housing programme, notably in Windmill Lane but also Riddins Mound in Rowley Regis; Lion Farm in Oldbury; and West Smethwick—soon known locally as the ‘Concrete Jungle’.¹⁴⁹ All were eventually targeted for regeneration schemes in the 1990s. West Smethwick used ‘Bison wall-frame’ panels of pre-cast reinforced concrete, a later discredited build method (Figure 4.7).¹⁵⁰ The scheme was approved by Smethwick’s Conservative-run council in 1965; Labour changed the plans when they won control of the new Warley Council. The design was debated nine times in housing committee before being approved in April 1967.¹⁵¹ During that time the number of housing units switched from the original 900 to 500 and then 720. A second 20-storey tower block was then added by the new Tory administration later in 1967.¹⁵² Thereafter, estate design in Warley was sharply contested politically, with the Labour opposition pressing for lower densities.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ Warley Corporation, ‘Housing’, 15. The term ‘Concrete Jungle’ was used by residents as well as people from outside to describe the West Smethwick estate: Harris, ‘Interview’; Kate Gordon, ‘Interview with Author’, 17 February 2016. Gordon was team leader of the Citizens Advice Bureau based on the West Smethwick estate in 1985–6.

¹⁵⁰ Eling, ‘Interviews’; ‘Bison or Bull: Faulty Towers? But it’s no joke!’, *The Sentinel*, November 1983, featured in Prospect Community Housing, ‘From There to Here . . . The social history of Wester Hailes’, [showcase website], <<https://hailesmatters.wordpress.com/2011/10/06/>>, accessed 20 April 2015. The article is a four-page investigation of the problems of Bison wall-frames at an Edinburgh estate. It followed a national review after Granada TV’s *World In Action* programme in June 1983.

¹⁵¹ ‘Quicker, cheaper West Smethwick scheme approved’, *Smethwick Telephone*, 6 April 1967; ‘Maxim Construction’s £2.7m Warley project’, *Financial Times*, 6 April 1967.

¹⁵² ‘How a dream turned into a nightmare’, *Smethwick News Telephone*, 5 July 1979; Duffell, ‘Interview’. See Special Note 17: Social and Physical change in Marshall Street and West Smethwick.

¹⁵³ ‘Aren’t they building slums now?’, *Warley News Telephone*, 24 April 1969?; ‘Urgent need for a powerful opposition—Labour’, *Warley News Telephone*, 23 April 1970; ‘Cape Estate—whose fault?’, *Warley News Telephone*, 7 June 1973.

Figure 4.7: West Smethwick Estate under construction, c.1969



Source: Joe Russell, 'West Smethwick Estate under Construction, c.1969', from Joe Russell and Alton Douglas, *Joe Russell's Smethwick*, 1984, 36. © Sandwell MBC. Reproduced with permission of Alton Douglas Books: Alton Douglas, 11 February 2016. View from Malthouse Point.

To conclude this section, Smethwick and Warley councils swept away the old 'slums', but largely replaced them with flats or high-density townhouses in big, system-built estates. This 'self-generating cycle of public authority activity' propped-up demand through rehousing, until clearance largely ended in the early 1970s. But the failure to recognise underlying, accelerating population loss led to significant overprovision of public housing already unpopular by 1974, so that the West Smethwick estate became the 'Concrete

Jungle'. This physical transformation created new, 'hard-to-change' characteristics.¹⁵⁴ As seen, system-build was widespread in English cities, but the degree of oversupply in Smethwick was acute. This 'lock-in' combined with the structural forces affecting Smethwick to create a thirty-year legacy of crisis management.

4.4 'Managing Decline': Housing in Sandwell

Reflecting on his period of elected office, Young observed: 'We realised later that we'd been managing decline'.¹⁵⁵ The council's 1987 housing strategy quoted the Audit Commission: 'It must be acknowledged straightaway that the problems facing the council are daunting'.¹⁵⁶ Within a year, government attempted to impose a solution by designating a HAT for two Sandwell 'problem estates'. This section identifies a phase of inertia to this breakpoint; then a 'reactive sequence' in housing management, to the stage where investment and population growth in the 2000s transformed the demand equation.

Sandwell brought together the past building activity of eight local authorities.¹⁵⁷ In 1981, it had what the council described as 'a varied, necessary and appreciated 58,000 stock of municipal homes' as one of the largest UK social landlords, forming half the local housing stock (Figure 4.8).¹⁵⁸ This was similar to Salford, although in Smethwick council housing was

¹⁵⁴ Michael Thompson and M. Bruce Beck, 'Coping with Change: Urban resilience, sustainability, adaptability and path dependence', [government report], *Foresight Future of Cities Working Paper*, London: Government Office for Science, 2015, 33. Also see Rast, 'Why History (Still) Matters', 13.

¹⁵⁵ Young, 'Interviews'.

¹⁵⁶ The quote was from the District Audit 1985/86 management letter mentioned earlier, reproduced in Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 175/87: 'Housing Investment Programme 1988/89, Appendix 1', meeting held on 15 July 1987.

¹⁵⁷ The 'six towns' prior to 1966 and the significant activity of Warley and enlarged West Bromwich in 1966–74.

¹⁵⁸ Sandwell MBC, 'Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Official Guide', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 1981. The precise figure was 58,482: Sandwell MBC, '1981/82 Budget', West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 1981. The 1981 Census indicated a lower figure of 55,386 but this still accounted for half (50.1 per cent) of

lower, at 40.1 per cent (Table 4.1). This proved the high-water mark. As seen, the national housing sector was particularly affected by spending cuts after 1976; while ‘Right-to-Buy’ legislation after 1981 contributed to socio-economic and cultural ‘residualisation’.¹⁵⁹ A loss of £125m in rent subsidy and capital allocations by 1989 was claimed.¹⁶⁰ Sandwell sold 7,665 homes in the first decade of Right-to-Buy, typically the best quality and most popular stock.¹⁶¹ Lucas observed: ‘We had a lot of poor-quality council housing, but we were not on our own in that respect. That was a given in any big urban authority’.¹⁶²

Table 4.1: Tenure and Flats in historic Smethwick and Salford, 1981

	Smethwick	Salford
Owner-occupied (%)	48.4	31.6
Rented from local authority (%)	40.1	51.9
Rented from housing association (%)	1.0	5.8
Private rented (%)	9.7	9.6
Rented with a job or business or other rented (%)	0.8	1.0
Purpose-built flats (units)	3,720	14,272
Flats as % of self-contained accommodation	17.5	36.8

Base: Tenure—All permanent households, flats—total self-contained accommodation, historic Smethwick and Salford.

Source: Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, ‘Census 1981 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables’, Table SAS 10 (tenure); Table SAS 33 (flats). Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

Sandwell households: Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, ‘Census 1981 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables’, Table 10. Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016. The English average was 32 per cent: Rita Diaz, ‘Housing Tenure’, [statistical report], *Shelter Factsheet*, London: Shelter, 2009, 3. Sandwell MBC’s 49,465 council stock in 1990 made it the seventh largest landlord in Britain: Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, ‘BCDC and HAT’, 17.

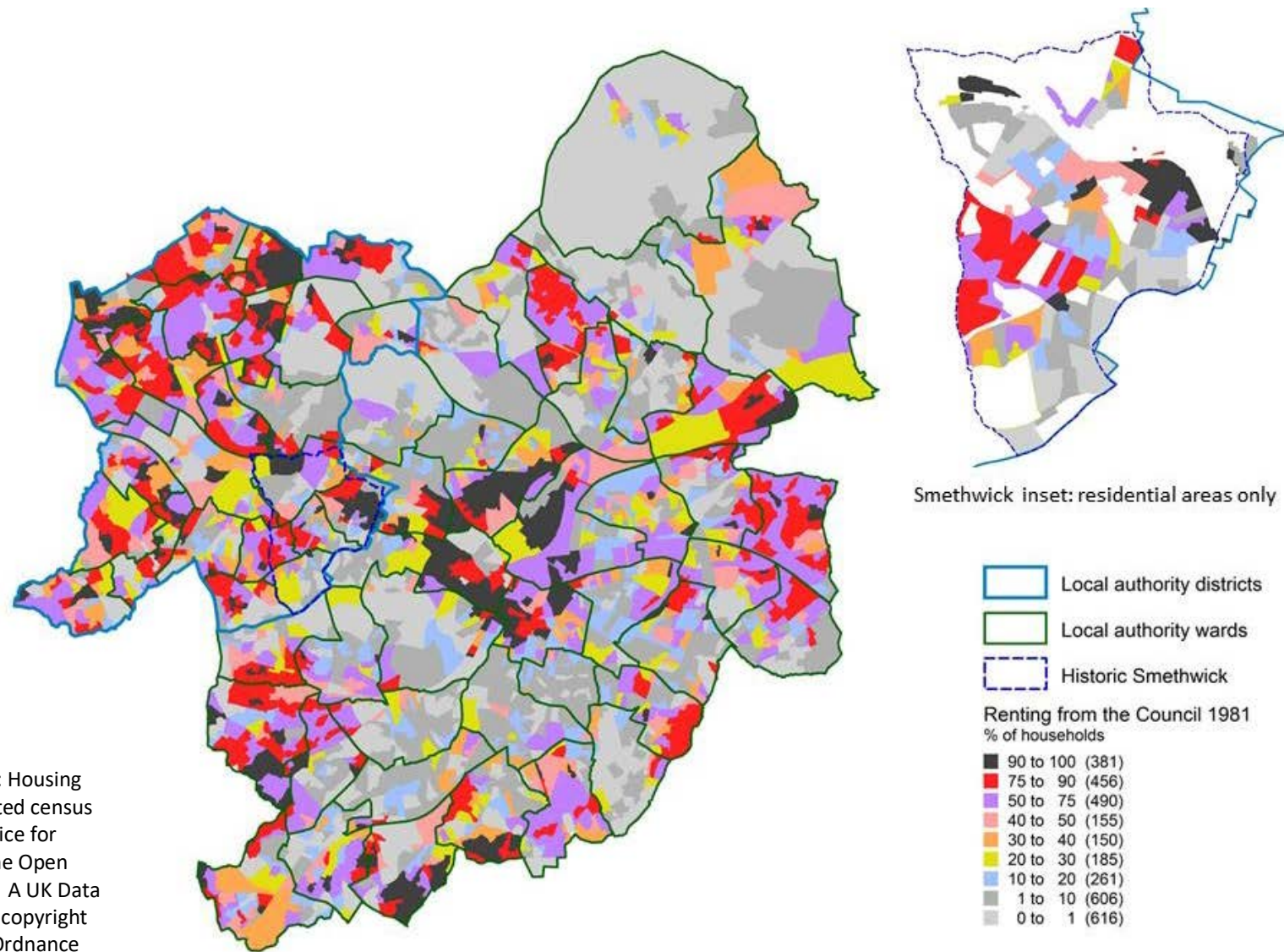
¹⁵⁹ Housing accounted for 6 per cent of public spending in 1978/79 but only 1.9 per cent by 1988/89: Rowena Crawford and Paul Johnson, ‘The Changing Composition of Public Spending: IFS Briefing Note 119’, [statistical report], London: Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2011, 5.

¹⁶⁰ ‘Why we won’t wear HATs’, *Express & Star*. Also see Sandwell MBC, ‘Housing Committee Minutes’, Minute 150/86: ‘Housing Investment Programme 1987/88, Appendix 1’, meeting held on 16 July 1986; Sandwell MBC, ‘Housing Committee Minutes’, Minute 175/87: ‘Housing Investment Programme 1988/89, Appendix 1’, meeting held on 15 July 1987.

¹⁶¹ ECOTEC Research & Consulting, ‘Changing Tenure, Poverty and Place in Sandwell 1971–2008’, [consultancy report], 2009, Technical appendix.

¹⁶² Lucas, ‘Interview’.

Figure 4.8: Council Housing in Sandwell and Birmingham, 1981



Source: See Special Note 6: Housing data for Smethwick. Adapted census and map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A UK Data Service product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

Figure 4.9: West Smethwick Estate as 'Concrete Jungle', 1969–92

Source: Top—'West Smethwick Estate in 1985–6', from Citizens Advice Bureau (Grenville Drive), *Tenant Consultation—Estate Improvement Plan*. © West Smethwick CAB. Reproduced with permission of Kate Gordon, 14 February 2016. Bottom left—'West Smethwick, 1983', from <http://jubilee.plmcreativ e.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/wsmehwick1983.jpg?4085fa>>Jubilee Arts, *The Bus Project, West Smethwick*. © Jubilee Arts Archive 1974–1994. Reproduced under the terms of the Creative Commons licence 'Attribution Non-commercial' (CC BY-NC). Accessed 29 January 2016. Bottom right—'West Smethwick Estate prior to Estate Action, c.1992', from Sandwell MBC: Housing Department, *Estate Action Programme*. © Sandwell MBC. Reproduced with permission of Brendan Nevin, 14 February 2016.



Sandwell by 1977 possessed evidence on difficult-to-let estates and potential solutions, such as intensive local management.¹⁶³ Yet the council was uncertain about the level of overall housing need into the early 1980s.¹⁶⁴ At this stage, low demand was largely confined to Windmill Lane and West Smethwick, with social and environment factors inextricably linked. The latter estate was described as 'riddled with problems', a 'prison block' and 'living hell'.¹⁶⁵ Persistent damp resulted in an internal and external insulation scheme as a 'last-ditch effort' in 1982.¹⁶⁶ The continued physical state of the properties in the next decade is shown in Figure 4.9. In witnessing the difficulties caused cuts to welfare benefits in the 1980s, Gordon judged poverty to be the dominating experience.¹⁶⁷ However, criminality and anti-social behaviour attributed to 'problem families' stigmatised West Smethwick.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 61/77: 'Difficult-to-let Housing - Appendix 1', meeting of the Lettings Sub-Committee held on 27 June 1977.

¹⁶⁴ The council concluded in 1980 that 'housing demand was to a large extent being met, particularly in the public sector'. The justification for a continued local authority building programme was 'one related to keeping pace with demolition and the need to provide specialist accommodation for the elderly, single and disabled': Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 204/80: 'Housing Investment Programme 1980/81, Appendix 1: Housing Strategy Statement', meeting held on 23 July 1980. An increase in the waiting list was shortly attributed to the limited new supply and the impact of rising unemployment: Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 206/81: 'Housing Investment Programme 1982/83, Appendix', meeting held on 22 July 1981.

¹⁶⁵ 'Vast "Concrete Jungle" riddled with problems', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 28 June 1979; 'Their living hell . . .', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 28 June 1979; 'Estate "like a prison block"—Angry tenants speak their minds', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 5 July 1979; '"Flatten estate" if clean-up fails Council urged', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 1 July 1982.

¹⁶⁶ Gordon, 'Interview'; 'Six year fight to answer to damp problem', *News Telephone*, 8 August 1974; 'Home not fit for humans—mother', *News Telephone*, 2 February 1975; 'War on damp erupts again', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 19 February 1976; 'Damper on it . . .', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 18 November 1976; '£540,000 plan to stop damp', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 15 July 1982.

¹⁶⁷ Gordon, 'Interview'.

¹⁶⁸ Lillian M. Jewkes, *Our Lost Village—The last years of Oldbury Road* (Smethwick: Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, n.d.), 41; 'Man beat wife in front of children', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 6 September 1979; 'Dog pack savage pet cat', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 19 June 1980; 'Family's home wrecked 13 times—move us plea', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 20 May 1982; 'Move us out of terror estate dad pleads', *News Telephone*, 14 July 1988. The disproportionate impact of 'problem families' at West Smethwick in the 1980s was witnessed by Harris and Garrett, then a local teacher and social worker respectively: Harris, 'Interview'; Garrett, 'Interview'.

Power argued the 1974 local government reorganisation had a ‘devastating impact on the already weak and complex structures of housing management’, through scaling-up and remoteness.¹⁶⁹ Housing departments also typically occupied a subordinate position within local authorities, in Sandwell described as a ‘poor relation, letting properties and looking after the tenants’.¹⁷⁰ As Eling saw it:

Anything to do with private sector housing and demolition wasn’t in housing; it was in environmental health. All the housing department had ever been was as a manager of council housing. Anything to do with building new houses was in planning or the works department. Not even the repairs were in housing.¹⁷¹

These structural divisions reflected the strong ‘departmentalism’ of the time, and the wider negative drivers identified were not unique to Sandwell. But the management problems of early Sandwell were at their sharpest in housing.¹⁷²

National cuts to housing budgets were compounded by local decisions and practice at political and officer level in Sandwell. Lucas considered that underlying cost and demand indicators were little understood by managers.¹⁷³ Wilkinson thought they were inured to deteriorating conditions.¹⁷⁴ Ponting remarked: ‘It was almost, “this is too difficult; this is what these people are doing; and this is the minimum we will do”’.¹⁷⁵ At an operational level, it was contended that planned maintenance was undertaken without

¹⁶⁹ Anne Power, *Property Before People: The management of twentieth-century council housing* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 84.

¹⁷⁰ Alison Ravetz, *Council Housing and Culture: The history of a social experiment* (London: Routledge, 2001), 112; Ian Cole and Robert Furbey, *The Eclipse of Council Housing* (London: Routledge, 1994), 133. Quote from Wilkinson, ‘Interview’.

¹⁷¹ Eling, ‘Interviews’. The Conservative leader in Sandwell similarly called housing the ‘Cinderella department of the council’ at this time: ‘Top Tory calls for rethink’, *Express & Star*, 11 August 1988.

¹⁷² Wilkinson, ‘Interview’; Nevin, ‘Interviews’; Steve Lodder, ‘Interview with Author’, 25 June 2013. Lodder worked in Sandwell housing department from 1973 to 2007 and was Area and then District Housing Manager for Smethwick in 1980–98.

¹⁷³ Lucas, ‘Interview’.

¹⁷⁴ Wilkinson, ‘Interview’.

¹⁷⁵ Laurice Ponting, ‘Interview with Author’, 4 July 2012. Ponting worked at Sandwell housing department from 1988 to 2002 and was head of housing strategy.

regard to housing management advice on priorities, and without notifying tenants in advance, still less consulting them. Windows were repainted rather than replaced with uPVC frames, a costly practice which provided ready work for the council's heavily-unionised direct labour organisation.¹⁷⁶

Members budgeted for rate contributions to the housing revenue account (HRA) every year between 1977/78 and 1989/90, when the HRA was ringfenced through legislation.¹⁷⁷ This subsidy was tempered, however, by the political decision to devote half Sandwell's housing capital allocation to private sector housing.¹⁷⁸ Nevin contended that the decision to use £19m from council reserves to build new council offices at Oldbury in 1991 used funds originally generated from the sale of council housing.¹⁷⁹ There was also an approach widely described as a 'low-rents policy' which by 1988 lost the HRA more than £2m income a year.¹⁸⁰ Lucas saw it as based on 'a fundamental and patronising view that, "we're dealing with poor people who can't afford to pay high rents"'.¹⁸¹ Nonetheless

¹⁷⁶ Lucas, 'Interview'; Wilkinson, 'Interview'.

¹⁷⁷ A total of £24.3m in contributions from the General Fund was budgeted and the actual expenditure was £29.7m in 1977-90: Sandwell MBC, 'Revenue Budget Books', [council report], West Bromwich and Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, [1975/76 to 2014/15]. See Special Note 33: Housing and Sandwell MBC Budgets.

¹⁷⁸ Nevin, 'Interviews'. This was justified to the author as a new Sandwell councillor in 1988 as a reflection of the tenure split.

¹⁷⁹ Nevin, 'Interviews'. It is not possible from the budget books to identify what proportion of the reserves came from house sales, but departmental underspends from the general fund were also a persistent feature of the eighties. Spending was constrained prior to 1988 by the fiscally cautious leadership through two council sub-committees: capital programme and recruitment of employees.

¹⁸⁰ Eling, 'Interviews'; Young, 'Interviews'; Page, 'Interview'; Lucas, 'Interview'; Wilkinson, 'Interview'; Nevin, 'Interviews'. Average weekly rents in Sandwell in 1988 were £17.80 compared to local metropolitan average of £18.66 (although two of the seven had rents lower than Sandwell). This was judged to lose more than £2m a year in rental income: Price Waterhouse, 'Main Report: Proposed Sandwell Housing Action Trust: Report of the study by a team led by independent consultants Price Waterhouse', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Department of the Environment, West Midlands Regional Office, 1988, para 128-130.

¹⁸¹ Lucas, 'Interview'.

Labour councillors faced vociferous opposition to 'Tory' rent rises from the Sandwell Tenants' Liaison Committee as well as the Sandwell Labour Party.¹⁸²

It appears service costs recharged to housing by other departments increased disproportionately after the HRA was ringfenced, resulting in additional pressure at a critical time.¹⁸³ This was officer-level practice, orchestrated at the corporate centre, to mitigate service cuts, but which reflected the prevailing organisational culture.¹⁸⁴ It was unfortunately not possible to identify the long-term pattern of such recharges, but costs to the HRA 'reallocated from other committees' rose from £2.2m in 1987/88 to £4.5m in 1992/93.¹⁸⁵ Lucas thought excessive recharges in Sandwell cost housing roughly £1m a year, while remarking it was commonplace practice in local government.¹⁸⁶

A DoE report found a 'minimum rent for minimum services' approach in some local authorities identified in an Audit Commission study as 'sufficiently close to be apt' for Sandwell by the late 1980s:

It contains the seeds of many of the problem that now affect much of the stock of council housing. Design standards have emphasised quantity (i.e. density) and speed over quality with all the problems associated with system building, tower blocks and deck access. Low rents have led to inadequate maintenance—since funds are simply not there to keep buildings in reasonable condition. Inadequate maintenance itself leads to arrears, lengthy relet periods and eventually to vandalism, which in turn adds to costs and limits the scope for affordable service improvements'.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸² "'Support rents protest" plea to councillors', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 19 March 1981; 'Rents are pegged', *News Telephone*, 1 December 1983; 'Rent rises will be kept down to £1-a-week', *News Telephone*, 13 February 1986. The rent freeze announced in 1983 followed the doubling of rents in the previous four years, largely prompted by Government withdrawal of housing subsidy. This was in pursuit of 'logic in the price paid': Ravetz, *Council Housing and Culture*, 206. Rent levels therefore became conflated with 'Tory cuts'; a rent freeze was broadly a unifying factor in the Labour Group. The political context tended to obscure the importance of maximising rental income to the HRA.

¹⁸³ Nevin, 'Interviews'; Wilkinson, 'Interview'. Also see SN 33: Sandwell MBC Budgets.

¹⁸⁴ Young, 'Interviews'.

¹⁸⁵ Sandwell MBC, 'Revenue Budget Books'.

¹⁸⁶ Lucas, 'Interview'.

¹⁸⁷ Audit Commission, 'Managing the Crisis in Council Housing', [government report], London: HMSO, 1986, cited in Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Main Report', para 139.

The DoE report exposed how income loss was compounded by excessive rent arrears and high voids in Sandwell. Spending on repairs was correspondingly low, which resulted in a backlog of 26,280 repairs by 1987.¹⁸⁸ Public criticism of housing by the local Member of Parliament was persistent and even councillors advised tenants to legally challenge repair delays and dampness.¹⁸⁹

Steps taken by the council to address estate problems immediately after 1977 amounted to little more than an annual 'statement of intent' in its capital funding bids to government.¹⁹⁰ Severe decline then took hold and by 1987, in twenty difficult-to-let areas with 5,826 dwellings voids ran at 25 per cent (Figure 4.10).¹⁹¹ This process drove up the overall stock vacancy rate during the 1980s (earlier Figure 4.6). Sandwell's inaction is examined in relation to Windmill Lane in the next chapter, but was further evidence for the external audit criticism, cited earlier, of a council with no clear strategy and content 'to carry

¹⁸⁸ Sandwell's council housing vacancy rate in July 1988 was 5.6 per cent, described as the fifth highest in the country. High rent arrears had been criticised by the District Auditor in its 1985–86 management letter, and had risen to £2.26m in September 1987, equivalent to 5.8 per cent of annual debit, compared to an expected 2 per cent. CIPFA data showed Sandwell spent 24 per cent less on repairs per property in 1987/88 than the local metropolitan district average. More than half (53.5 per cent) of the 26,280 repairs had been outstanding for more than three months: Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Main Report', para 118–131.

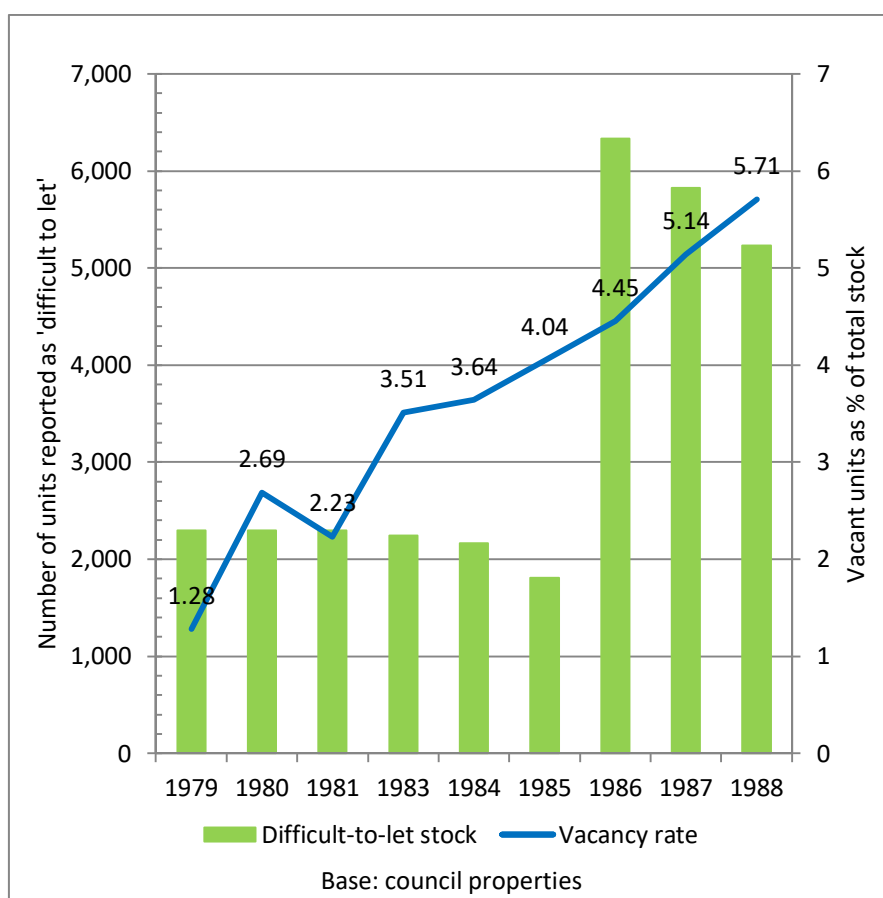
¹⁸⁹ 'Faulds slams council over repairs', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 13 September 1979; 'Tenants told go to court', *News Telephone*, 19 January 1984.

¹⁹⁰ Its 1979 Housing Strategy Statement indicated the 'wish to pay attention to environmental improvements on high-density estates': Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 245/79: 'Housing Investment Programme 1979/80, Appendix 6 Housing Strategy Statement 1979', meeting held on 24 September 1979. Its 1981 strategy identified that 'stopping the rot' required an intensive 'interdisciplinary' response, physical investment and estate management with resident involvement. The council indicated a focus on three estates, one being Windmill Lane, with input from regional and national DoE: Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 206/81: 'Housing Investment Programme 1982/83, Appendix', meeting held on 22 July 1981. In 1983, it planned 'physical improvements and investment in management infrastructure to further decentralise estate supervision and housing maintenance in areas of highest need': Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 150/83: 'Housing Investment Programme 1984/85, Appendix 4', meeting held on 4 July 1983. In 1984 the strategy indicated the 'feasibility of introducing locally-based management and repairs services on priority estates will be investigated'. At this point it gave a highly conditional commitment to property and environmental upgrade, demolition and land disposal in Windmill Lane: Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 114/84: 'Housing Investment Programme 1985/86, Appendix 1', meeting held on 2 July 1984.

¹⁹¹ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 175/87: 'Housing Investment Programme 1988/89, Appendix 1', meeting held on 15 July 1987.

on as before'. In reflecting on this period, Eling recalled the political pain at Labour Group in contemplating clearance at Lion Farm in 1988: 'really unpopular, hard-to-let, poorly-designed and built stock and yet we still had real difficulty taking the decision'.¹⁹² Such strategic and management failings were glaringly evident to DoE.

Figure 4.10: Housing demand, Sandwell MBC stock, 1979 to 1988



Source: Sandwell MBC, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, [1974–90], Minute 245/79: 'Housing Investment Programme 1979/80, Appendix 6 Housing Strategy Statement 1979', meeting held on 24 September 1979; Minute 204/80: 'Housing Investment Programme 1981/82, Appendix 1 'Housing Investment Programme 1981/82, meeting held on 23 July 1980; Minute 206/81: 'Housing Investment Programme 1982/83, Appendix', meeting held on 22 July 1981; Minute 196/82: 'Housing Investment Programme 1983/84', meeting held on 12 July 1982 (Housing Needs Appraisal form not minuted as an appendix); Minute 150/83: 'Housing Investment Programme 1984/85, Appendix 4', meeting held on 4 July 1983; Minute 114/84: 'Housing Investment Programme 1985/86, Appendix 1', meeting held on 2 July 1984; Minute 153/85: 'Housing Investment Programme, Appendix: Housing Strategy 1986-87', meeting held on 14 August 1985; Minute 150/86: 'Housing Investment Programme 1987-88, Appendix 1: Housing Strategy 1987-88', meeting held on 16 July 1986; Minute 175/87: 'Housing Investment Programme 1988/89, Appendix 1', meeting held on 15 July 1987; Minute 203/88: 'Housing Investment Programme 1989/90, Appendix', meeting held on 6 July 1988.

¹⁹² Eling, 'Interviews'.

The announcement by DoE of a housing action trust for Windmill Lane and Lion Farm in July 1988 precipitated a crisis. Critically, it followed recent changes in the political leadership of the Labour Group discussed earlier. Wilkinson argued: 'From 1988 onwards there was a step change, precipitated by the HAT'.¹⁹³ Similarly Nevin: 'The HAT episode hit hard at the culture'.¹⁹⁴ The council response to the estate crisis was central to the 1987–92 conjuncture, setting-up a reactive sequence.¹⁹⁵ The HAT announcement expedited the opening of 33 local offices to decentralise the housing service, although this proved costly to run and was later scaled-back.¹⁹⁶ Spending on repairs was sharply increased and the backlog fell to under 20,000 during 1988/89.¹⁹⁷ This required use of housing balances and subsidy from the general fund equivalent to 21 per cent of HRA expenditure in 1988/99.¹⁹⁸ However, a £5 a week rent increase was applied at the same time.¹⁹⁹ As part of the corporate changes identified earlier, private sector housing moved from environmental health to the housing department and a new housing strategy team established, with fresh political and executive leadership for the department by 1992.²⁰⁰ The reported political involvement in lettings was ended (until resurfacing as a practice in the 2010s).²⁰¹

¹⁹³ Wilkinson, 'Interview'.

¹⁹⁴ Nevin, 'Interviews'.

¹⁹⁵ Mahoney, 'Path Dependence', 527, 531, 527, 535; Peter Malpass, 'Path Dependence and the Measurement of Change in Housing Policy', *Housing, Theory & Society*, 28/4 (2011), 305–19, 307.

¹⁹⁶ Price Waterhouse, 'Proposed Sandwell Housing Action Trust: Report of the supplementary study of the wider Cape Hill area by a team led by independent consultants Price Waterhouse', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Department of the Environment, West Midlands Regional Office, 1989, para 121-2.

¹⁹⁷ Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Cape Hill Study', para 31, 119.

¹⁹⁸ Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Main Report', para 138.

¹⁹⁹ Thereafter, rent levels were steadily increased. The customer impact was blunted because 75 per cent of tenants received Housing Benefit: Lucas, 'Interview'.

²⁰⁰ Eling, 'Interviews'; "'Panic" claim over housing shake-up', *Express & Star*, 19 August 1988. Note: This restructure and associated changes linked to the HAT campaign transferred, promoted or recruited several managers later interviewed for this study. Specifically these are: Parish, Tuck, Gregory, Lodder, Wilkinson, Ponting, Nevin, and Young (later also a councillor)—see interview biographies at Appendix II. This is potentially a biasing factor, since it was not possible to interview the previous political and officer leadership in housing to gauge the choices and constraints they faced. The Price Waterhouse reports are useful in this respect, although written in support of DoE objectives.

²⁰¹ Young, 'Interviews'; Nevin, 'Interviews'.

A fatal fire in 1990 at Merryhill Court, Black Patch triggered a radical programme of refurbishment and (mostly) demolition of high-rise blocks.²⁰² This was undertaken at a pace that reportedly surprised technical services staff because corporate understanding of the issues was limited.²⁰³ Detailed income-expenditure profiling eventually revealed two tower blocks at West Smethwick cost the HRA £357,000 a year even before debt charges.²⁰⁴ Yet £586,000 was spent on their refurbishment in 1988.²⁰⁵ Eling recalled: 'We had poured money into rubbish. Most of the blocks we demolished we'd put new lifts in six months before'.²⁰⁶ In the 1990s, Sandwell gained funding for thirteen Estate Action projects for the most problematic estates, commencing with Windmill Lane and including a highly successful scheme at West Smethwick, rebranded as Galton Village (Figure 4.11). In contrast to Windmill Lane, the council supported a variety of social, environment and local management projects in the 1980s, notably through Community Links and an estate-based Citizen's Advice Bureau (later Figure 4.17).²⁰⁷ But in 1990 it concluded that 'the estate, in its current form, had no future' and it commenced a clearance and rebuild programme, with

²⁰² 'Towering inferno at Smethwick', *Daily Mail*, 16 July 1990; Lodder, 'Interview'; Wilkinson, 'Interview'; Nevin, 'Interviews'. This incident is discussed further in Chapter 5.

²⁰³ Wilkinson, 'Interview'; Young, 'Interviews'; Nevin, 'Interviews'.

²⁰⁴ Lucas, 'Interview'; Sandwell MBC, 'A High-Rise Strategy for Sandwell', [council report], Smethwick: Sandwell MBC, Housing Department, 1997, 66.

²⁰⁵ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 26/88: 'Painting and refurbishment of Malthouse and Sandfield Point, Smethwick', meeting of the Housing (Tenders) Sub-Committee held on 17 May 1988; Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 54/88: 'Refurbishment of Passenger Lifts, Malthouse and Sandfield Point, Smethwick', meeting of the Housing (Tenders) Sub-Committee held on 10 August 1988. There was no discussion of these two blocks in the earlier district plan: Sandwell MBC, 'South East District Strategy Statement', [council report], Smethwick: Sandwell MBC, Housing Department, 1993.

²⁰⁶ Eling, 'Interviews'.

²⁰⁷ Gordon, 'Interview'. 'Community Links gave estate new heart', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 7 January 1982; 'Help on the way for the "Jungle"', *News Telephone*, 23 June 1983; 'New centre on way for estate', *News Telephone*, 27 October 1983; 'Film will show how to beautify "Concrete Jungle"', *News Telephone*, 9 February 1984; 'Mural plan to brighten up "Concrete Jungle"', *News Telephone*, 19 March 1984; Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 169/84: 'West Smethwick Estate - Establishment of Area Housing Office', meeting held on 2 July 1984. Also see SN 17: Marshall Street and West Smethwick.

extensive community engagement.²⁰⁸ These Estate Action schemes reflected the new departmental culture and helped secure DoE confidence.²⁰⁹

Figure 4.11: West Smethwick Estate: from 'Concrete Jungle' to Galton Village



Source: Adam Carey, 'Chance's Drive, Galton Village', 2 October 2011. © Adam Carey. This 100-metre stretch had four or even five successive houses on it in the twentieth-century: 1840s court; 1920s rebuild (possibly); 1940s prefab following bomb damage; 1960s 'Bison wall-frame' flat; and this family housing after the Estate Action scheme in the 1990s. Source: Observation from comparison of successive 1:1250 scale maps listed in the bibliography and Peter Kennedy, *The Air Raids on Smethwick 1940–42* (Smethwick: Smethwick Local History Society, 1995), 4. Also see Special Note 17: Social and Physical change in Marshall Street and West Smethwick.

²⁰⁸ Sandwell MBC, 'Minutes of the Housing Strategy Committee', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, [1990–2000], Minute 63/90: 'Regeneration of Galton Village', meeting held on 13 November 1990. Also Wilkinson, 'Interview'.

²⁰⁹ Brendan Nevin, Patrick Loftman *et al.*, 'An Evaluation of the Estate Action Programme at Smethwick', [consultancy report], Birmingham: University of Central England, 1993, 88-9. Also Young, 'Interviews'.

Despite these policy shifts, the 1990s was dominated by the legacy of a large-scale, poor quality, underfunded and badly-managed stock. At the time, Lucas told the author he had received letters from ‘about 50 areas’ complaining about ‘forgotten estates’, illustrating how widespread the problem was. Population decline fuelled by outmigration continued in Sandwell until 2002 (Chapter 3).²¹⁰ The strong revival of the private rented sector provided an alternative to local authority stock.²¹¹ First evident in the high turnover and abandonment at Windmill Lane, much of the system-built stock and even some traditionally-built estates became difficult-to-let. Despite clearance of 2,271 council properties in 1995–99 alone, the municipal void rate in Sandwell remained stuck at 5 per cent.²¹² Acute low demand stretched in a zone from Smethwick to Lion Farm and Harvills Hawthorn (Figure 4.12). Clearance eventually reached 7,216 with a particular concentration (2,387) in Smethwick (Figure 4.13 to Figure 4.15). The council stock halved after 1981, with continued sales a further factor.²¹³ Reduction in supply, sustained house price rises and strong population growth from 2002 resulted in a high demand for council stock, which meanwhile benefited from heavy investment through the ALMO.²¹⁴

²¹⁰ Sandwell MBC, ‘Sandwell Trends 1995’, [statistical report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, Policy Unit, 1995, 7.

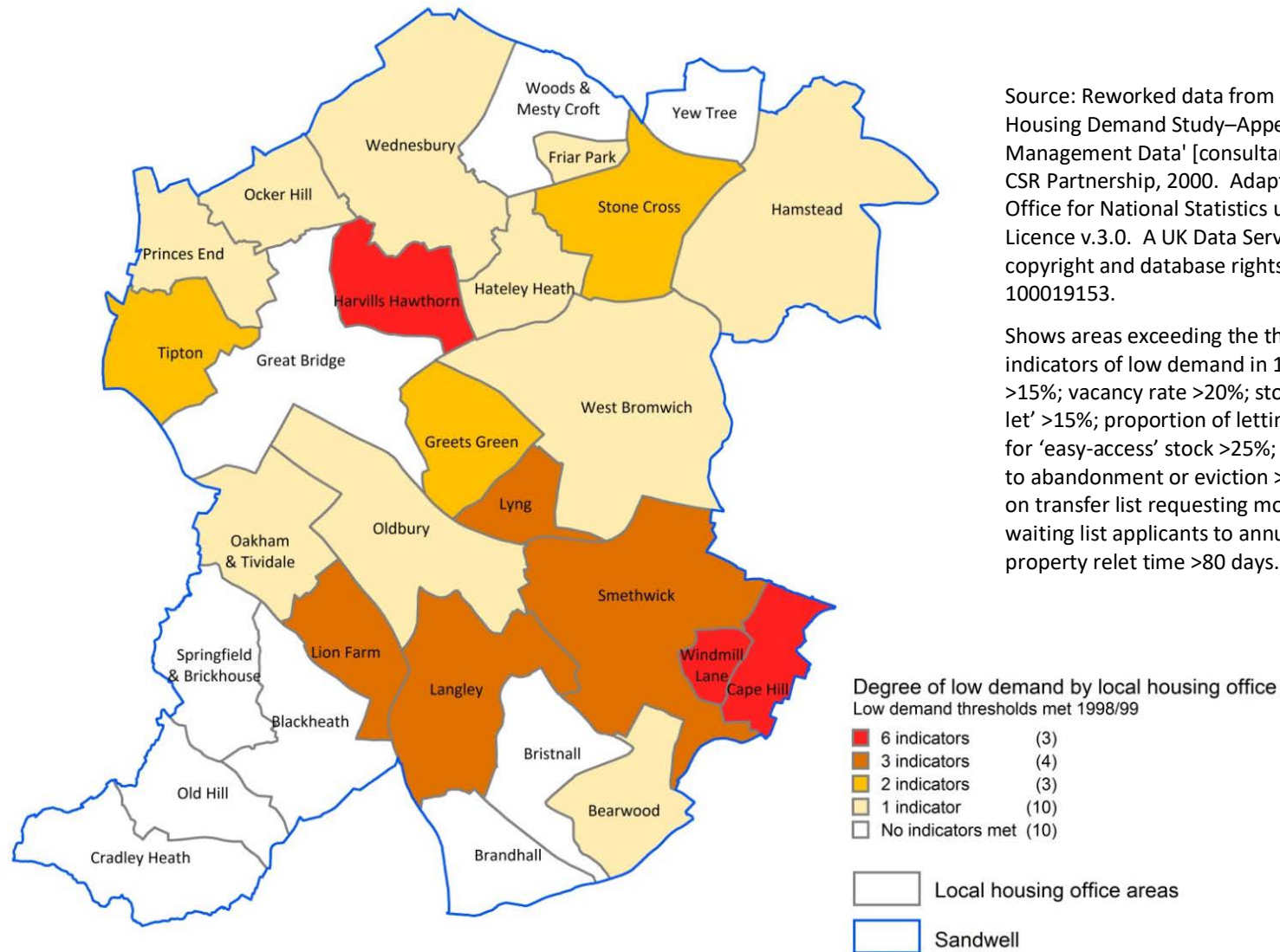
²¹¹ CSR Partnership, ‘Sandwell Housing Demand Study: Main Report’, [consultancy report], Birmingham CSR Partnership, 2000, 83.

²¹² CSR Partnership, ‘Housing Demand’, 26.

²¹³ ECOTEC Research & Consulting, ‘Changing Tenure’, Technical Appendix. By 2015 the stock stood at 29,463 compared to 58,482 in 1981: ‘Sandwell council homes rents to rise’, *Express & Star*, 21 January 2015. In 2011, council renting accounted for 22.7 per cent of Sandwell households compared with 50 per cent in 1981. There was, however, a growth in other social housing providers such as housing associations, from 1,245 (1.3 per cent) to 5,852 (4.8 per cent): Office for National Statistics, ‘Census 2011 England and Wales: Key Statistics’, Table 10. Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

²¹⁴ Neville Rowe, ‘Interview with Author’, 16 March 2013. Rowe was a housing research officer and manager at Sandwell MBC. By 2010, 90 per cent of Sandwell’s stock met the national ‘decent homes’ standard, compared to 29 per cent in 2002: Sandwell MBC, ‘Decent Homes (Sandwell Homes Properties) 2010’, *Sandwell Trends* [government website], <<http://www.sandwelltrends.info/lisv2/navigation/tables.asp>>, accessed 17 May 2015. The remaining decentralised network of 16 housing offices was reduced to a single housing service centre in each of the ‘six towns’ in 2012: ‘New homes for families’, *Sandwell Herald*, Autumn 2011, 12.

Figure 4.12: Low demand for council housing in Sandwell, 1999



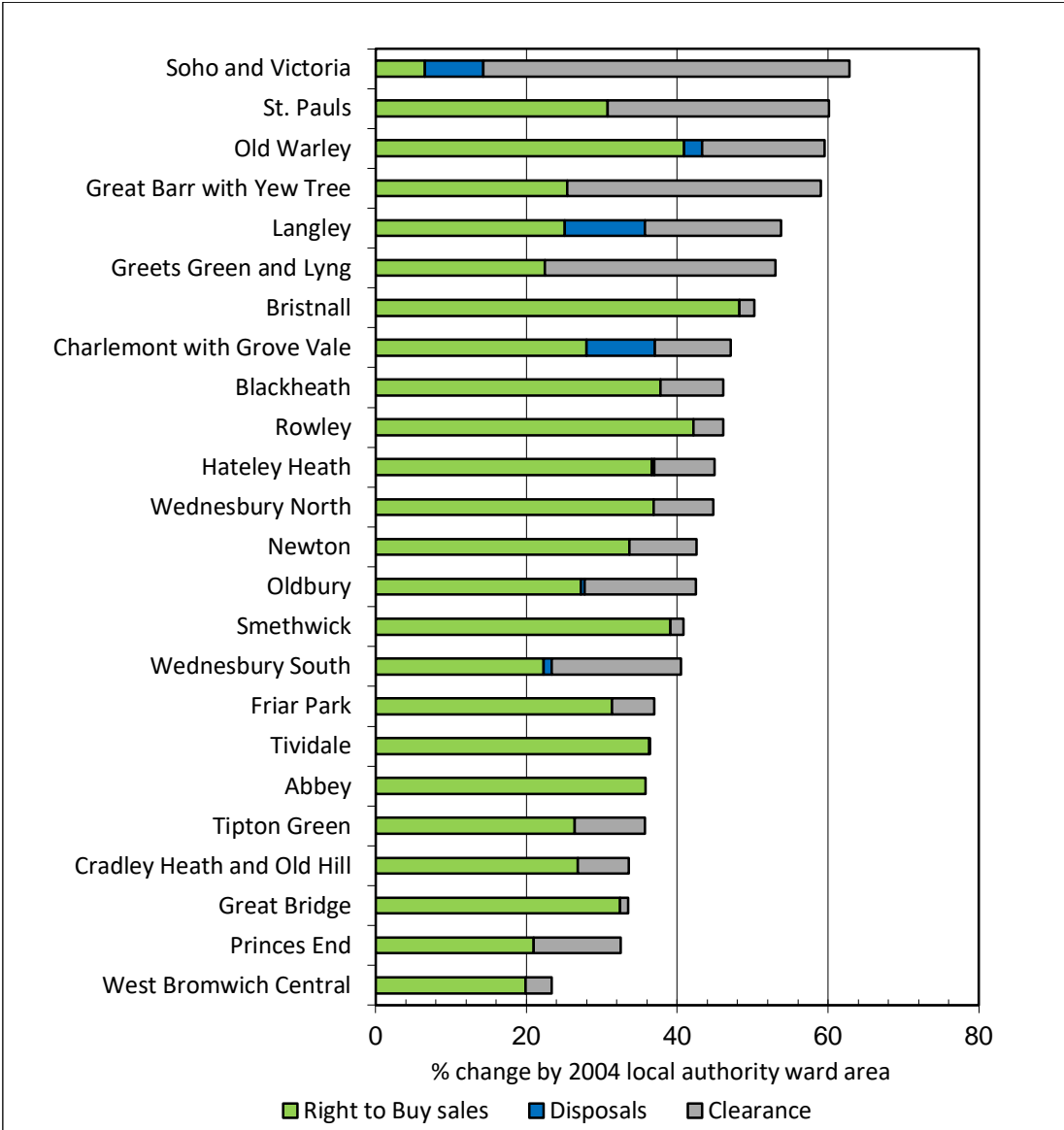
Source: Reworked data from CSR Partnership, 'Sandwell Housing Demand Study—Appendix 1 Housing Management Data' [consultancy report], Birmingham: CSR Partnership, 2000. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A UK Data Service product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

Shows areas exceeding the thresholds for up to eight indicators of low demand in 1998/99: stock turnover >15%; vacancy rate >20%; stock designated 'difficult to let' >15%; proportion of lettings to homeless or eligible for 'easy-access' stock >25%; property terminations due to abandonment or eviction >11%; proportion of tenants on transfer list requesting move out of area >18%; ratio of waiting list applicants to annual turnover <2; average property relet time >80 days.

To conclude this section, Sandwell inherited a housing portfolio with a significant proportion of difficult-to-manage, system-built stock; undermined by a national policy of demunicipalisation and disinvestment, and the wider environment of deindustrialisation and changing aspirations. The new housing department was not equal to this challenge in its early years, although it was denied investment through a 'low-rents policy' and income diversion into non-housing services by the local authority. The public landlord culture was a feature of the inertia characterising housing until the HAT crisis, when an active, although expedient, management approach emerged. The reactive sequence after 1992 was marked by the tensions inherent in the 'politics of support' affecting the approach to stock transfer.²¹⁵ Continued population decline necessitated enormous levels of clearance to stabilise estates, with the necessary investment eventually secured through the ALMO. The problems in Smethwick were particularly acute: successfully addressed in West Smethwick, while the more chequered position in Windmill Lane is considered in the next chapter.

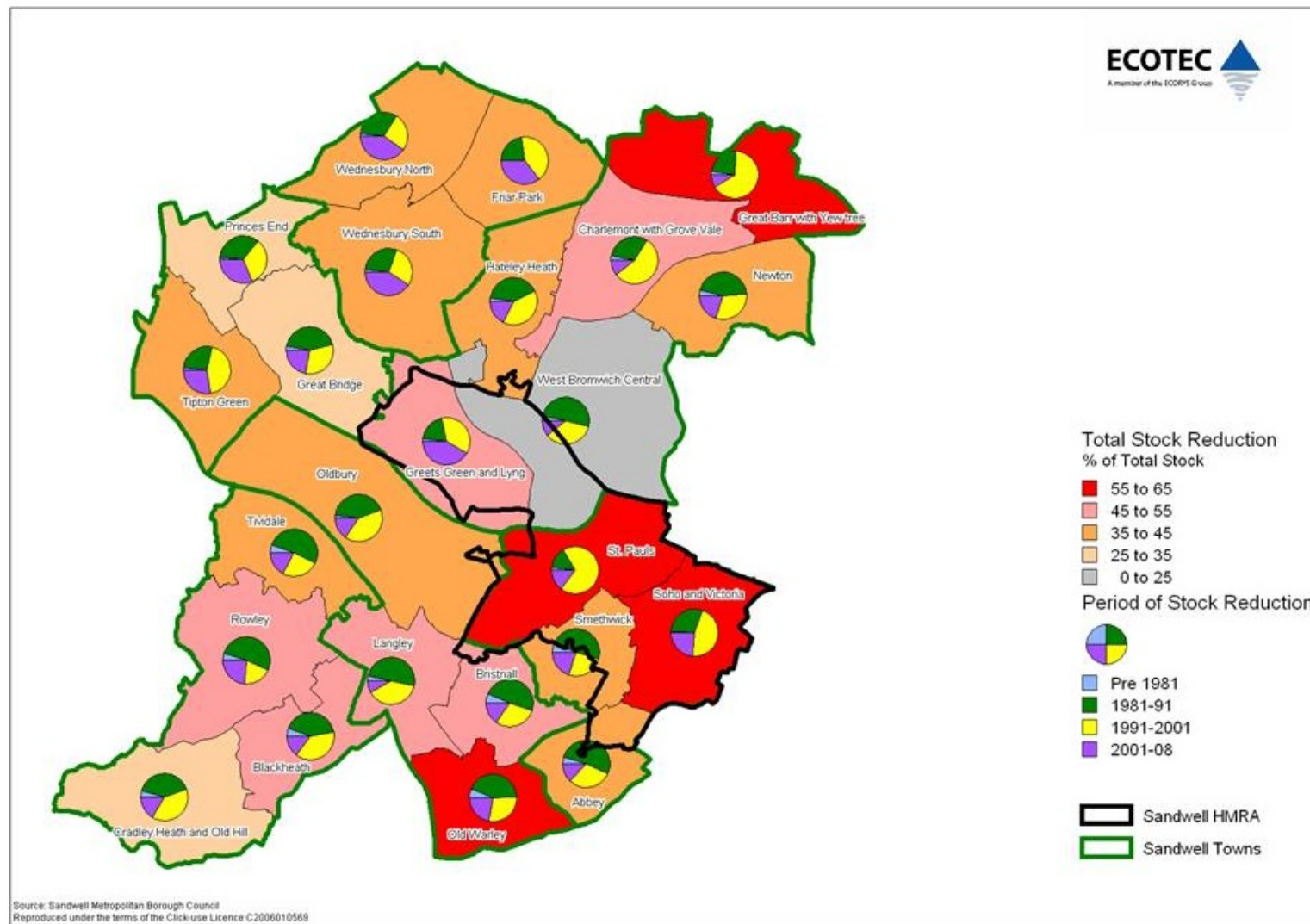
²¹⁵ Young, 'Interviews'.

Figure 4.13: Reduction in Sandwell MBC stock due to Sales, Disposals and Clearance, 1981 to 2008



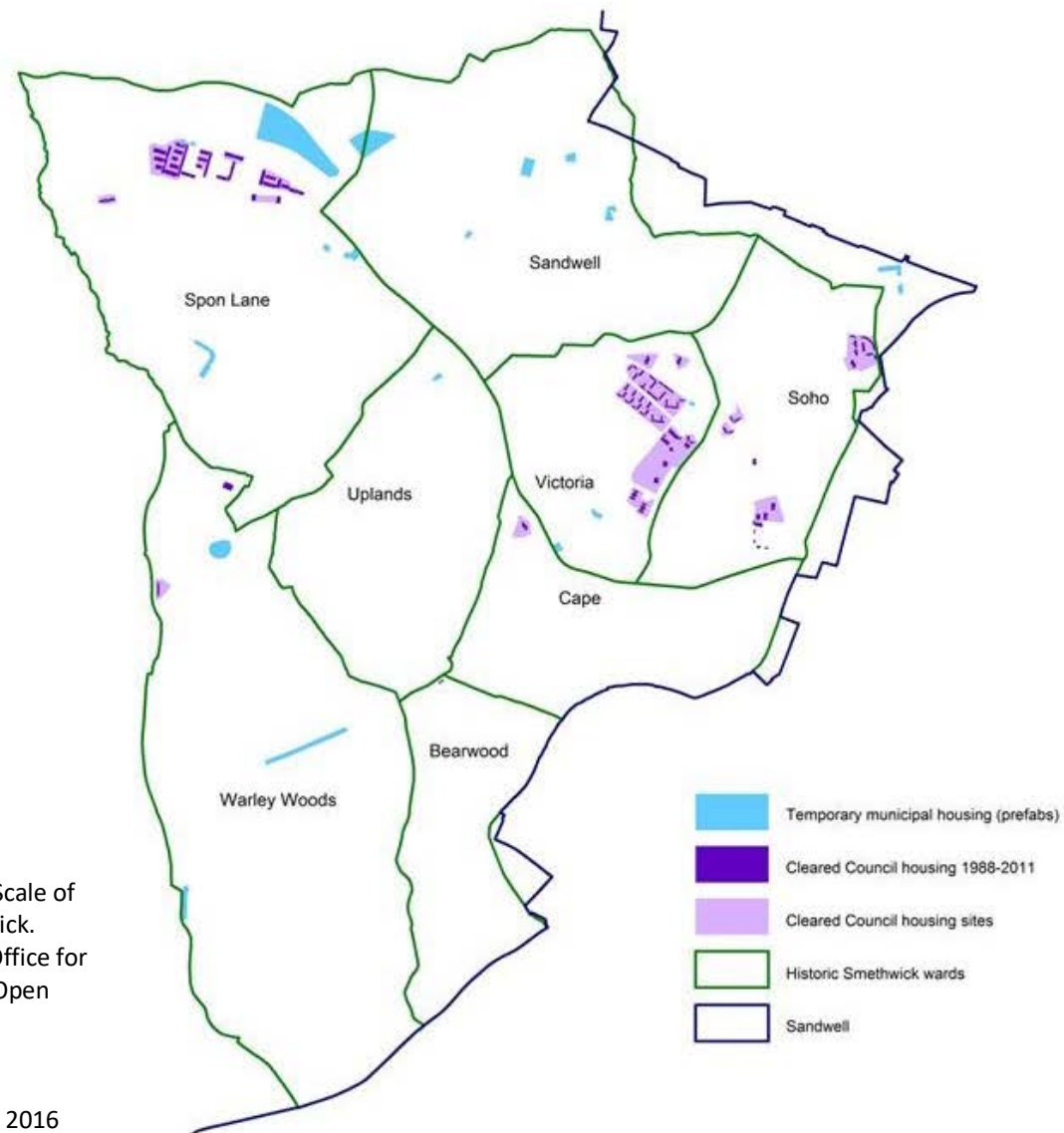
Source: ECOTEC Research & Consulting, 'Changing Tenure, Poverty and Place in Sandwell 1971–2008', [consultancy report], 2009, Figure 2.

Figure 4.14: Reduction in Sandwell MBC stock by period from 1981 to 2008



Source: ECOTEC Research & Consulting, 'Changing Tenure, Poverty and Place in Sandwell 1971–2008', [consultancy report], 2009, Map 13.

Figure 4.15: Public Sector Housing Clearance in Smethwick, 1951 to 2011



Source: See Special Note 25: Scale of Housing Clearance in Smethwick. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A Landmark Information Group Ltd/EDINA product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

4.5 'Smethwick-ticked-all-the-boxes': Regeneration, partnerships and the 'politics of local closure'

Deindustrialisation and urban decay posed a fundamental challenge across much of Sandwell from the late 1970s, eventually attracting central government intervention. This section discusses the origin of area-based regeneration activity in Tipton, then Smethwick to become a widespread, but fragmented process in Sandwell. The national backdrop and the Smethwick experience show how 'actually occurring regeneration' fuses an 'amalgam of top-down and bottom-up priorities and preferences'.²¹⁶ The section charts the local dimension: a terrain complicated by ambiguity about 'place' in Sandwell and the role of community partnerships.

The interviews elicited a view that Smethwick disproportionately received long-term regeneration resources with little to show for it.²¹⁷ It was suggested Smethwick 'ticked-all-the-boxes' to secure successive area-based initiatives (ABIs) in a climate of Sandwell 'chasing' government project funding.²¹⁸ But others argued Smethwick was exploited in this way, or that other areas were (unfairly) prioritised by politicians.²¹⁹ Young referred to this as the 'politics of envy'.²²⁰ Eling argued it reflected perceptions, not facts.²²¹ Smethwick was clearly targeted for early housing initiatives due to private stock condition and the

²¹⁶ Steven Henderson, Sophie Bowlby, and Mike Raco, 'Refashioning Local Government and Inner-city Regeneration: The Salford Experience', *Urban Studies*, 44/8 (2007), 1441–63, 1442.

²¹⁷ Prestidge, 'Interview'; Ponting, 'Interview'.

²¹⁸ Ponting, 'Interview'; Josan, 'Interview'. The section heading draws on a comment by Bubalo: there have been a number of initiatives, which have involved the local authority not wishing to miss out on funds available and we've put a bid in and it just happens that Smethwick has ticked all the boxes to draw that funding down': Nick Bubalo, 'Interview with Author', 14 October 2013. Bubalo was a planner with Sandwell since 1985 and since 2011 Area Director – Regeneration and Economy, with responsibility for Smethwick and West Bromwich.

²¹⁹ Darren Cooper, 'Interviews with Author', 10 July and 11 September 2013. Cooper was a Sandwell Labour councillor for Soho and Victoria ward after 1991 and council leader from 2010 who also grew up Windmill Lane.

²²⁰ Young, 'Interviews'.

²²¹ Eling, 'Interviews'.

worst estate problems (Figure 4.16).²²² This housing investment may have unduly influenced perceptions of the level of (separate) regeneration devoted to Smethwick.²²³

After the end of national urban policy in 2010, neither the council nor central government could list the type, location and funding value of past ABIs in Sandwell.²²⁴ Some thirty-seven separate regeneration and housing schemes covering 100 separate geographies dating back to 1974 have nevertheless been mapped through this research.²²⁵ Following the awarding of Inner Area Programme (IAP) status to Sandwell in 1982, the Urban Programme funded a variety of environmental, social and economic projects until 1995.²²⁶ ABI and council resources were directed to the main zone of deprivation, with Smethwick, Tipton and West Bromwich town centre all identified for 'comprehensive action' (Figure 4.17).²²⁷

²²² Sandwell had the highest *per capita* expenditure of West Midlands county local authorities on private sector housing renovation grants in 1993–96: CSR Partnership, 'Housing Demand', 19. Between 1991 and 2005, some 2,575 renovation grants were made in Sandwell, of which half (49.7 per cent) were in Smethwick: Sandwell MBC, 'Freedom of Information Request 1-705082324: Renovation Grants 1991–2005', [personal communication to author], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, Private Sector Housing, 2015. Some 47 per cent of older housing in Smethwick was found to be unfit in a stock survey from 1988–91. Half (50.4 per cent) surveyed properties deemed to be unfit under the 1985 Housing Act were located in Smethwick: Sandwell MBC, 'Sandwell Trends 1995', 16.

²²³ Nevin, 'Interviews'.

²²⁴ Department of Communities and Local Government, 'Response to Mr Adam Carey FOI request – Ref F0007463 on Sandwell urban regeneration funding', [personal communication to author], 31 January 2014; Hayley Insley, 'Smethwick and Sandwell area-based initiatives and SMBC funding', [personal communication to author], 8 November 2013; Judith Wick, 'Area-based regeneration initiatives and funding in Sandwell [ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]', [personal communication to author], 19 June 2015.

²²⁵ See Special Note 30: Mapping area-based initiatives (ABIs) in Sandwell.

²²⁶ Sandwell MBC, 'Revenue Budget Books'.

²²⁷ Sandwell MBC, 'Minutes of the Policy Committee', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, [1974–90], Minute 19/88 of the Inner Areas Sub-Committee: 'Review of Inner Area Priority Areas', meeting held on 21 March 1988. The IAP area also attracted 41 per cent of Sandwell's £153m capital spending on housing, land and infrastructure in 1986–90, into localities containing 29 per cent of its population: Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'BCDC and HAT', 24.

The government-designated BCDC covered the main employment areas and derelict sites from 1987–98, but excluded much of Tipton and Smethwick (Figure 4.18). The advent of competitively-funded ABIs after 1991 saw Tipton awarded City Challenge (£37.5m). This was followed by the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) Round 1, where three areas shared £28m, including North Smethwick.²²⁸ SRB4 provided £10.8m to Smethwick from 1997–2004 (Figure 4.19).²²⁹ But SRB Rounds 2–3 and 5–6 and a Health Action Zone were district-based schemes. European Union structural funds and the sub-regional ‘regeneration zone’ of the regional development agency (RDA) covered much of Sandwell.²³⁰ So did the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) and its successor, the Working Neighbourhoods Fund.

Greets Green in West Bromwich was selected for the £56m New Deal for Communities (NDC) scheme in 2000–10 (Figure 4.20).²³¹ In this decade, family-related ABIs such as Children’s Fund, On Track, Sure Start and Education Action Zone were widespread. So too were the ‘place’ initiatives of neighbourhood management, street wardens and community renewal areas. Several areas gained both family and place ABIs: Cradley Heath/Old Hill (which also received SRB1 and Community Links support); Tipton; central Oldbury; Beeches Road (latter also receiving private housing schemes); and Harvills Hawthorn in West Bromwich. This last estate was also targeted for housing investment (Estate Action, ERCF and a PFI) and shortlisted for the NDC programme that went to Greets Green.

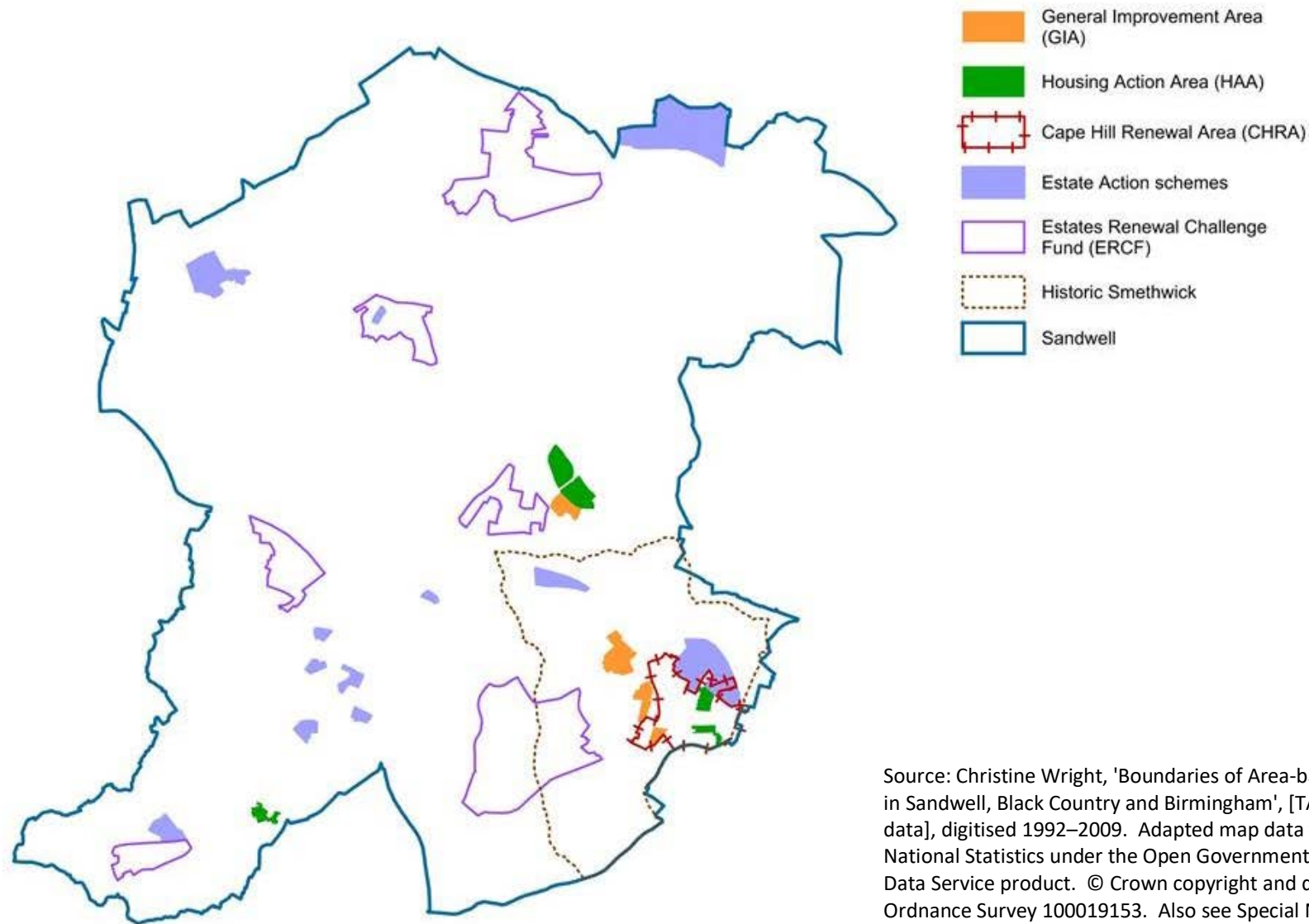
²²⁸ Sandwell MBC, ‘Sandwell Trends 1997’, [statistical report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, Research Unit, 1997, 69.

²²⁹ Smethwick Regeneration Partnership, ‘Smethwick Pride—Annual Report 1998/1999’, [council report], Smethwick: Sandwell MBC, 1999.

²³⁰ These were the European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

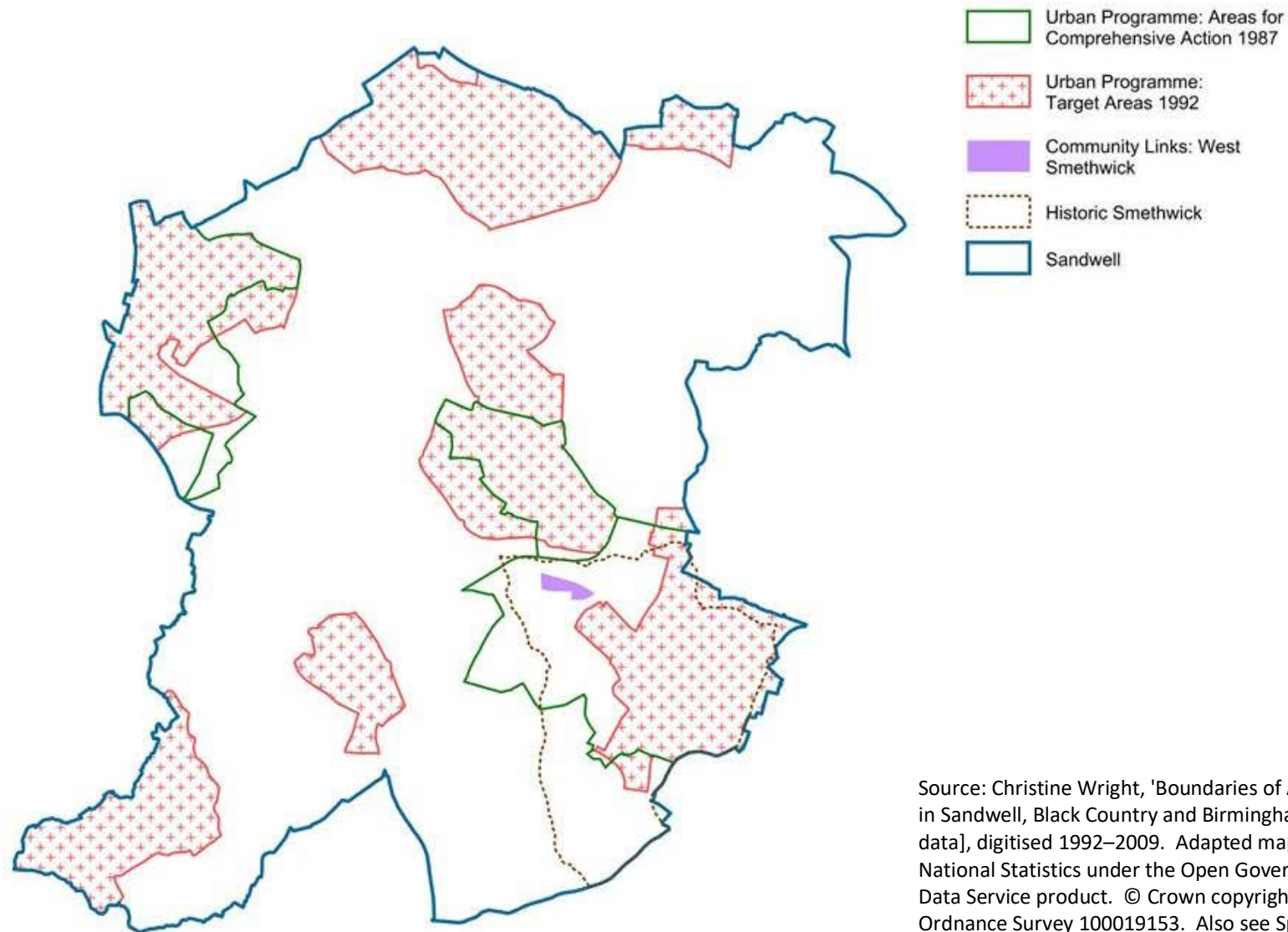
²³¹ Greets Green Partnership, ‘The Greets Green Story, 2000–2010’, [government report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2010.

Figure 4.16: Housing programmes in Sandwell, 1974–98



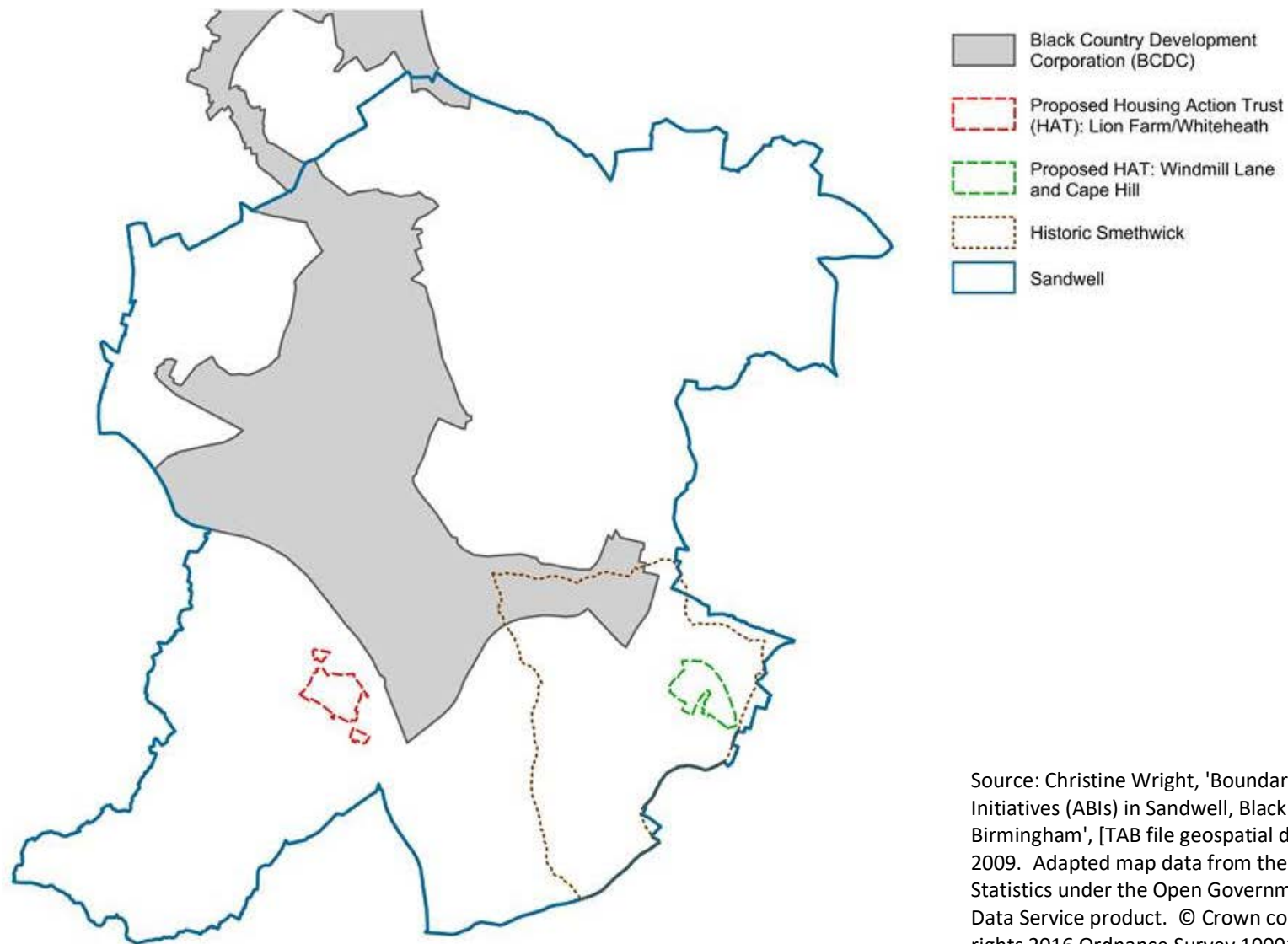
Source: Christine Wright, 'Boundaries of Area-based Initiatives (ABIs) in Sandwell, Black Country and Birmingham', [TAB file geospatial data], digitised 1992–2009. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A UK Data Service product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153. Also see Special Note 30: Mapping area-based initiatives (ABIs) in Sandwell.

Figure 4.17: Social, Environment and Community Regeneration programmes in Sandwell, 1983–94



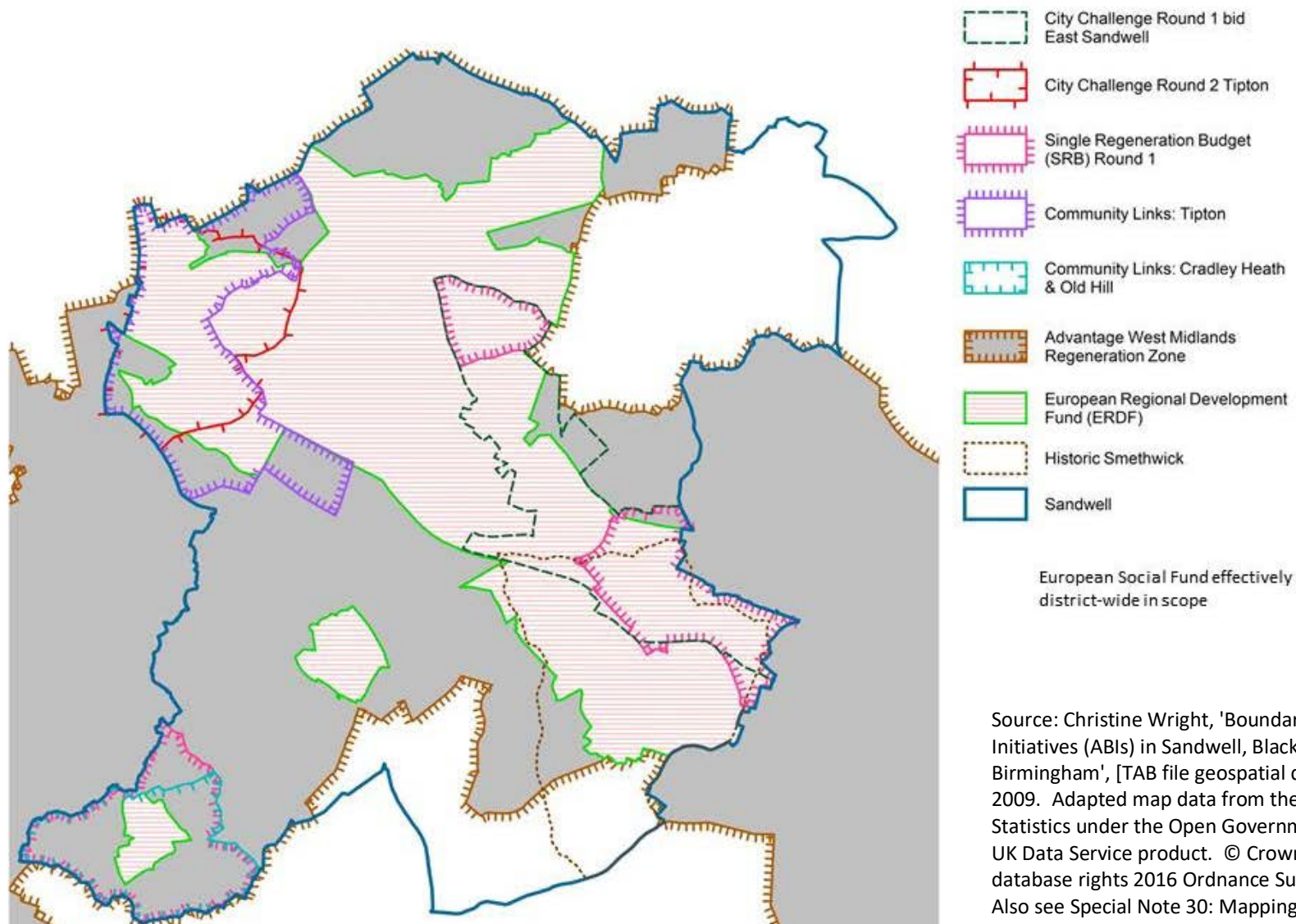
Source: Christine Wright, 'Boundaries of Area-based Initiatives (ABIs) in Sandwell, Black Country and Birmingham', [TAB file geospatial data], digitised 1992–2009. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A UK Data Service product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153. Also see Special Note 30: Mapping area-based initiatives (ABIs) in Sandwell.

Figure 4.18: Government-designated bodies in Sandwell 1987–98



Source: Christine Wright, 'Boundaries of Area-based Initiatives (ABIs) in Sandwell, Black Country and Birmingham', [TAB file geospatial data], digitised 1992–2009. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A UK Data Service product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153. Also see Special Note 30: Mapping area-based initiatives (ABIs) in Sandwell.

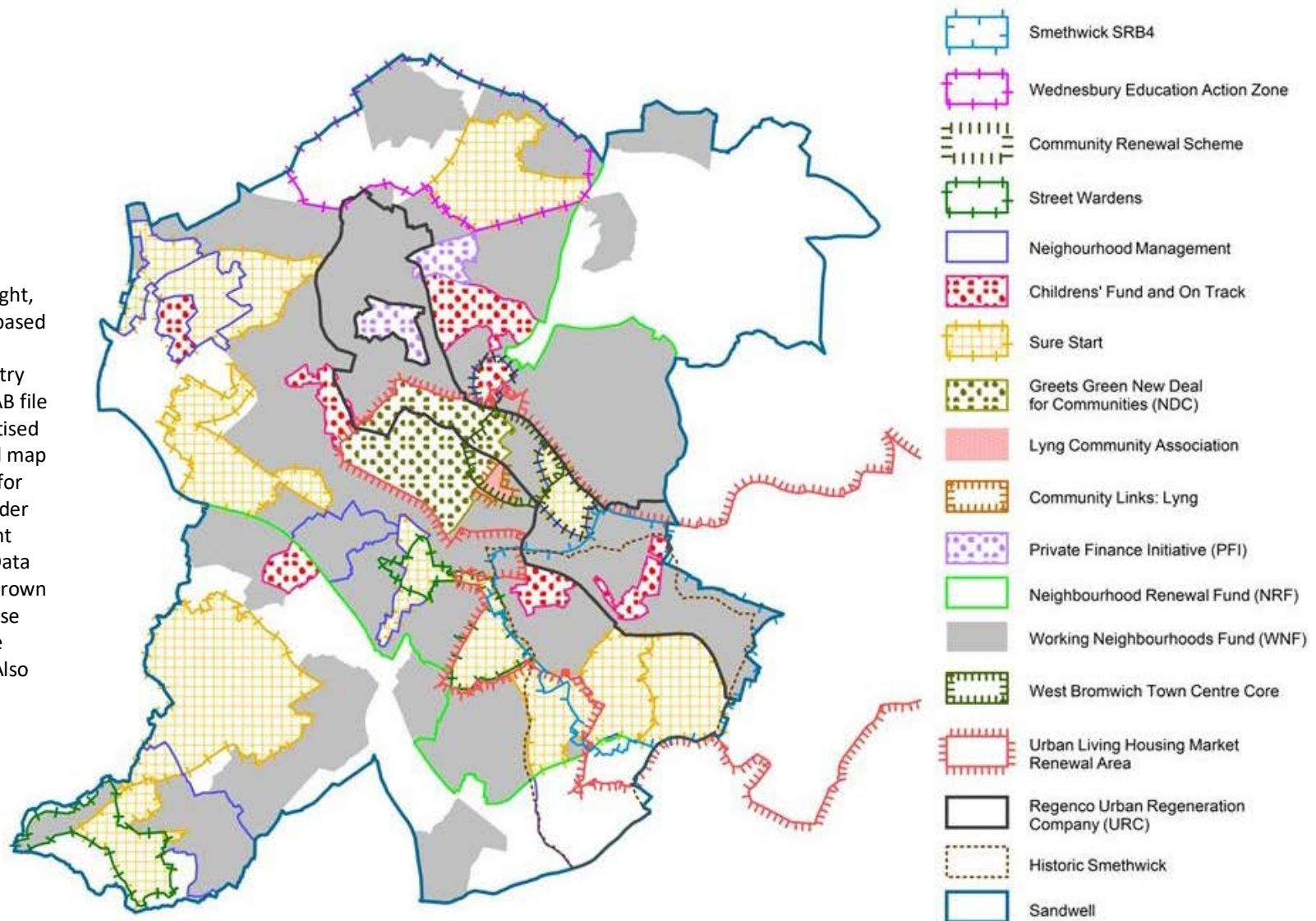
Figure 4.19: Area-based Initiatives and Structural Funds in Sandwell, 1990s



Source: Christine Wright, 'Boundaries of Area-based Initiatives (ABIs) in Sandwell, Black Country and Birmingham', [TAB file geospatial data], digitised 1992–2009. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A UK Data Service product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153. Also see Special Note 30: Mapping area-based initiatives (ABIs) in Sandwell.

Figure 4.20: Area-based Initiatives and Delivery Vehicles in Sandwell, 1998 to 2011

Source: Christine Wright, 'Boundaries of Area-based Initiatives (ABIs) in Sandwell, Black Country and Birmingham', [TAB file geospatial data], digitised 1992–2009. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A UK Data Service product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153. Also see Special Note 30: Mapping area-based initiatives (ABIs) in Sandwell.



The mapping indicates that despite perceptions, Smethwick was not disproportionately targeted by type or financial values of regeneration initiative. It was not seriously considered for the NDC scheme.²³² Instead, the Sandwell picture was a ‘scatter-gun’ approach of different partnerships and delivery vehicles, particularly after 2000.²³³ This was the local manifestation of the ‘patchwork quilt’ and ‘bowl of spaghetti’ descriptions of ABIs nationally (Chapter 2). It was viewed by interviewees as resulting from ‘chasing’ national funding, with a distorting impact.²³⁴ According to Nevin: ‘It followed money overly, so there were policy oscillations. So it lacked vision, it was fragmented, policy-driven by central government rather than locally, and by additional funding than around a local strategy.’²³⁵ Young argued it then ‘almost abrogated the locality of any sense of meaningful planning and let them off the hook; or it frustrated that local plan if indeed there ever was one: some single strategic overview for Smethwick’.²³⁶ Finally, the operating dilemma was put by Dutton: ‘But that was Government policy then—and if you didn’t play by those rules you didn’t get any funding. It would have taken incredibly strong and brave leadership to fly above all that’.²³⁷

²³² The potential Smethwick area shortlisted for NDC was identified as ‘West Smethwick’: that is the area of private sector housing adjacent to the High Street, but excluding the West Smethwick estate (Galton Village): Sandwell MBC, ‘New Deal for Communities: Analysis of eight potential NDC areas’, [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, Research Unit, 1999. Given the area’s statistical profile this was ‘making up the numbers’ and Windmill Lane was not considered.

²³³ Clive Dutton, ‘Interview with Author’, 30 August 2013. Dutton worked at BCDC, headed Tipton City Challenge and was Sandwell Head of Regeneration and later Director of Planning and Regeneration at Birmingham.

²³⁴ Young, ‘Interviews’; Lucas, ‘Interview’; Ponting, ‘Interview’; Khamis, ‘Interviews’; Gerry Dawson, ‘Interview with Author’, 11 November 2013; Peter White, ‘Interview with Author’, 26 September 2007; Paul Jeffrey, ‘Interview with Author’, 13 June 2014. Dawson was interim chief executive of Urban Living, the Birmingham-Sandwell housing market renewal pathfinder, from 2007–08. White was a fellow director of CSR Partnership with the author and led the Smethwick Canalside Study for Smethwick SRB4. Jeffrey was a Director at ECOTEC Research & Consulting.

²³⁵ Nevin, ‘Interviews’.

²³⁶ Young, ‘Interviews’.

²³⁷ Dutton, ‘Interview’.

The ‘generative conditions’ for Sandwell’s enthusiastic embrace of the ‘regeneration game’ crystallised in the critical 1987–92 period.²³⁸ When Sandwell gained IAP status in 1982, a small task force was established under the leadership of regional DoE. The purpose was to develop a strategy for the Smethwick area. But the task force was soon disbanded, partly because of conflicts with the local authority over priorities.²³⁹ As discussed, the designation of the BCDC and Sandwell HAT met with a sharp reaction in the local authority, marking the low-point in central-local relations.²⁴⁰ Recognising the interlocking problems affecting it, the council in 1989 meanwhile launched the ‘Smethwick Initiative’ to coordinate service management and spending in the three northern Smethwick wards, only for it to disappear without trace.²⁴¹ However, the council submitted an uninvited bid to DoE in 1991 for Round 1 of City Challenge.²⁴² This covered a zone stretching from North Smethwick to West Bromwich town centre (Figure 4.19).²⁴³

²³⁸ Mahoney argued permissive conditions represent ‘structural vulnerabilities in an institution or other system’ that make it ‘highly susceptible to rapid, large-scale change’. Generative causes are triggers that, under the right conditions, can produce significant change: James Mahoney, ‘Conceptualizing and explaining Punctuated versus Incremental Change’, [academic paper], *Paper presented at the 2010 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC, September 2010*, 2010, 10–11; quoted in Rast, ‘Why History (Still) Matters’, 22. The latter phrase is from Nick Oatley, ‘Competitive Urban Policy and the Regeneration Game’, *The Town Planning Review*, 66/1 (1995), 1–14.

²³⁹ Ken Spencer, Andy Taylor *et al.*, *Crisis in the Industrial Heartlands—A Study of the West Midlands* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 190.

²⁴⁰ Based on UDCs, DoE intention was to ‘establish analogous bodies to take over local authority housing’: Department of the Environment, ‘Housing: The Government’s Proposals’, [government report], *White Paper, Cmnd 214*, London: HMSO, 1987, quoted in Tiesdell, ‘Forgotten Policy’, 363.

²⁴¹ Sandwell MBC, ‘Policy Committee Minutes’, Minute 154/89: ‘The Smethwick Initiative’, meeting held on 3 July 1989. Despite the decision to establish a dedicated team and develop a costed action with a strong community engagement component, there are no subsequent references to the ‘Smethwick Initiative’ in Sandwell MBC committee minutes.

²⁴² Oatley, ‘Regeneration Game’, 12.

²⁴³ Brendan Nevin, ‘East Sandwell Partnership—A Multi-Agency Strategy for Renewal and Investment: City Challenge preliminary submission, July 1991’, [consultancy report], Birmingham: Birmingham Polytechnic, Faculty of the Built Environment, 1991.

By 1991 the council's relationship with BCDC was characterised as 'conflict and pragmatism'.²⁴⁴ The spiralling cost of the new Black Country spine road led to a £25m cut in BCDC spending programmed for Tipton. Round 2 of City Challenge offered the opportunity to secure replacement funding. According to Valler and Betteley, BCDC brought legitimacy with DoE, but the council consequently lost control of the area selection and programme leadership; Dutton from BCDC being appointed as Executive Director.²⁴⁵ However, the Tipton Partnership Board was chaired by Eling, a Smethwick councillor. Dutton suggested that Sandwell keenly wanted and valued Tipton City Challenge precisely because it saw it leading to a 'new paradigm' after the conflict of the BCDC and HAT era.²⁴⁶ The Tipton scheme successfully met its outputs.²⁴⁷ This and concurrent housing programmes helped to secure the local authority's 'reinvention as a capable player'.²⁴⁸

The local authority resisted the formation of a Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) in Sandwell in 1991.²⁴⁹ But in a major shift, duplicative business support activities were removed in concert with the TEC, and by 1996, a new community regeneration approach was enshrined in Sandwell's first regeneration strategy; and ostensibly in council structures.²⁵⁰ This resulted in the evolution of the Sandwell Partnership, which sponsored funding bids for successive national ABIs. The strategic dilemma was expressed by Bubalo: 'Where are your priorities in a Borough like Sandwell?'²⁵¹ In the absence of a strategic

²⁴⁴ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'BCDC and HAT', 44-5.

²⁴⁵ Valler and Betteley, 'Local Policy', 2400.

²⁴⁶ Dutton, 'Interview'.

²⁴⁷ CSR Partnership, 'Tipton Challenge Partnership: Mid-term Evaluation', [consultancy report], Birmingham: CSR Partnership, 1996; CSR Partnership, 'Tipton Challenge Partnership: Final Evaluation', [consultancy report], Birmingham: CSR Partnership, 1998.

²⁴⁸ Valler and Betteley, 'Local Policy', 2404.

²⁴⁹ Valler and Betteley, 'Local Policy', 2399. Sandwell TEC was one of 82 TECs established in England.

²⁵⁰ Valler and Betteley, 'Local Policy', 2403; Nevin, 'Interviews'.

²⁵¹ Bubalo, 'Interview'.

spatial framework, a reactive sequence developed after 1992, with activity driven by political allocations geared to the politics of support, and by entrepreneurial officers in different departments. In contrast to Manchester and Salford's 'principle of persistence', Nevin argued that 'Sandwell started badly on too many fronts and was unable to complete them'.²⁵² This oscillation was encouraged by New Labour's neighbourhood regeneration approach (Chapter 2). But it pointed to a 'lack of conjoining command' derived from Sandwell's governance culture.²⁵³

This dynamic was seen in the history of Smethwick Regeneration Partnership (SRP), the SRB4 scheme underway at the close of City Challenge in 1998. Dutton remarked that Smethwick was 'the only other place in Sandwell that had both the opportunity and ingredients for public-private and community sectors working with a proper plan'.²⁵⁴ SRP was subsequently regarded as an effective scheme that delivered its outputs.²⁵⁵ Its capacity-building approach built on previous SRB1 activity to support the growth of a range of BME-based third sector bodies.²⁵⁶ The SRP Board, as in Tipton chaired by Eling,

²⁵² Nevin, 'Interviews'. The 'principle of persistence' is from R. Dodgson, 'Human Geography at the End of Time? Some thoughts on the notion of time-space compression', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 17 (1999), 607–20, cited in Mike Raco, Stephen Henderson, and Sophie Bowlby, 'Changing Times, Changing Places: Urban development and the politics of space-time', *Environment and Planning A*, 40/11 (2008), 2652–73, 2670.

²⁵³ The phrase is from C. Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta 1946–1988* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1989), 5 as quoted in Alan Harding, Stuart Wilks-Heeg, and Mary Hutchins, 'Business, Government and the Business of Urban Governance', *Urban Studies*, 37/5–6 (2000), 975–94, 984.

²⁵⁴ Clive Dutton, 'Smethwick research', [personal communication to author], 24 April 2014.

²⁵⁵ ECOTEC Research & Consulting, 'Regenerating Smethwick: SRB4 Programme mid-term evaluation', [consultancy report], Birmingham: ECORYS UK, 2001; Eling, 'Interviews'; Dutton, 'Interview'; Khamis, 'Interviews'; Diane Wright, 'Interview with Author', 4 February 2014; Sandra Spence, 'Interview with Author', 8 July 2013; Wright was a senior council officer and Windmill Lane resident. Spence was Chief Executive of Black Country Housing Group and a member of various partnership boards, including Urban Living.

²⁵⁶ Johur Uddin from the North Smethwick Resource Centre said it 'focussed on community organisations like ourselves, SYCC, SPMA, and CAP: we're here because of SRB4': Uddin, 'Interview'. Also, Josan, 'Interview'; Khamis, 'Interviews'; Gary Bowman, 'Interview with Author', 4 February 2014; Stewart Towe, 'Interview with Author', 28 August 2013. Bowman was a senior council officer and Windmill Lane resident. Towe was CEO of

developed a strategic perspective beyond programme governance.²⁵⁷ Stimulated by the original community visioning conference, it produced a regeneration strategy for the whole of Smethwick, not just the SRB4 area.²⁵⁸ Its town masterplan in 2000 followed widespread community engagement. This identified the need for a 'place' approach, because SRB4 was initially focused on 'people'.²⁵⁹ A detailed delivery plan for Smethwick canalside was produced in 2002.²⁶⁰ This initiative led to tensions with Sandwell planners, although it was nominally adopted as council policy.²⁶¹

SRP saw itself as a strong, inclusive partnership of residents, businesses and public agencies and trusted 'voice of Smethwick', with an understanding of local issues, a vision of change and a practical programme.²⁶² It wanted to argue the case for Smethwick in the emerging partnerships that covered wider areas; push forward the masterplan, be a base for holding together diverse interests in Smethwick; and ensure the accountability of the

Hadley Group, a Smethwick firm and actively involved in successive local regeneration partnerships dating back to Smethwick SRB4.

²⁵⁷ Eling, 'Interviews'; Khamis, 'Interviews'.

²⁵⁸ CSR Partnership, 'Smethwick SRB Round 4 Bid: Report on Local Conference held on 9 December 1997', [consultancy report], Birmingham: CSR Partnership, 1998, 6; CSR Partnership, 'An Outline Strategy for Smethwick Town: Smethwick Regeneration Partnership', [consultancy report], Birmingham: CSR Partnership, 2000.

²⁵⁹ CSR Partnership and Llewelyn-Davies, 'Smethwick Regeneration Strategy: Masterplan', [consultancy report], Birmingham: CSR Partnership, 2000. Khamis, 'Interviews'.

²⁶⁰ CSR Partnership, 'North Smethwick Canalside Delivery Plan', [consultancy report], Birmingham: CSR Partnership, 2003.

²⁶¹ White, 'Interview'. The appointment of consultants to undertake the masterplan interrupted the planners' own early work: Sandwell MBC, 'Draft Smethwick Masterplan', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 1999. The resulting Smethwick Town Plan was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the 2004 Unitary Development Plan, but was immediately seen as being in conflict with it: David Rhead, 'North Smethwick Canalside, Smethwick, West Midlands Gateway 1, Acceptance for Appraisal Report to Projects Executive, 13 March 2007', [HCA internal report], Birmingham: English Partnerships, 2007.

²⁶² CSR Partnership, 'Report on Board Away Day, 27 June 2002: Achievement to date, forward strategy and the future roles and responsibilities of Smethwick Regeneration Partnership', [consultancy report], Birmingham: CSR Partnership, 2002, 3. In this report, Khamis from CSR Partnership described SRP as 'one of the strongest regeneration partnerships we have come across in all our work': CSR Partnership, 'SRP Board Away Day', 13. SRP demonstrated Whitehead's characterisation of some local SRB partnerships as 'able to develop a distinctive moral geography around participation within and commitment to urban community problems': Mark Whitehead, '"In the Shadow of Hierarchy": Meta-governance, policy reform and urban regeneration in the West Midlands', *Area*, 35/1 (2003), 6–14, 12.

new bodies to residents and businesses in Smethwick.²⁶³ However, as in Tipton, successful delivery of short-term outputs with the end of SRB4 funding reinforced the sense of a ‘job done’ in Smethwick.²⁶⁴ Chatterton and Bradley termed statutory agency withdrawal the ‘politics of local closure’.²⁶⁵ SRP’s proposal was not accepted and the partnership ended in 2005.

The Sandwell ‘towns’ were described as a convenient conduit for externally-funded, time-limited projects. In this analysis, ‘place’ was equated with, and restricted to regeneration.²⁶⁶ But there was a strategic need, eventually underlined by the Treasury’s 2006 sub-national review, to focus regeneration effort on areas with sufficient economic scale and coherence (Chapter 2).²⁶⁷ The Sandwell Plan had already agreed to ‘develop West Bromwich as the primary town centre for culture, shopping and business’.²⁶⁸ This became integral to the wider attempt to develop a spatial strategy for the wider Black Country, albeit with a grandiose and unfundable vision.²⁶⁹ But after 2000, regeneration funding streams were ‘layered’ to support a significant council intervention in West Bromwich,

²⁶³ CSR Partnership, ‘SRP Board Away Day’, 4.

²⁶⁴ This is a common feature of ABIs: Raco, Henderson *et al.*, ‘Changing Times, Changing Places’, 2654.

²⁶⁵ Paul Chatterton and David Bradley, ‘Bringing Britain Together? The limitations of area-based regeneration policies in addressing deprivation’, *Local Economy*, 15/2 (2000), 98–111, 104. See Special Note 31: The Sandwell ‘Six Towns’ and the politics of ‘envy’ and ‘closure’.

²⁶⁶ Young, ‘Interviews’; Lucas, ‘Interview’; Wilkinson, ‘Interview’; Ponting, ‘Interview’; Nevin, ‘Interviews’; Uddin, ‘Interview’; Alun Severn, ‘Interview with Author’, 29 January 2013; Kerry Bolister, ‘Interview with Author’, 15 October 2013. Severn was a social enterprise consultant and writer on race relations who grew up in Marshall Street, Smethwick. Bolister was Area Director – Homes and Communities at Sandwell MBC after 2011.

²⁶⁷ HM Treasury, ‘Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration’, [government report], London: HM Treasury, 2007, Terms of Reference, 105.

²⁶⁸ Sandwell MBC, ‘Sandwell Plan 2003’, para 8.2.

²⁶⁹ Nevin, ‘Interviews’; Jeffrey, ‘Interview’. Also Steven Henderson, ‘From Sub-Regional Networks to Sub-Regional Localism: Experiences of collaboration in England’s historical Black Country’, *Regional Studies*, 49/9 (2015), 1497–513, 1503. It is useful to compare the hubristic ‘vision statement’ by Shared Intelligence, ‘Looking Forward: The Black Country in 2033’, [consultancy report], Oldbury: Black Country Consortium, 2003 with a perceptive article on the area after it had entered decline: ‘The Black Country—Removing the blackness’, *Financial Times*, 24 January 1974.

although the wider ABI fragmentation continued. Whether this focus was at the ‘expense’ of Smethwick; financially or qualitatively in terms of governance attention, was contested in the interviews.²⁷⁰

Two new delivery vehicles were established in this period. The first, Regenco, an urban regeneration company (URC) was instigated by the council.²⁷¹ Sandwell pursued the URC as a ‘pragmatic pathway to government funding’ to advance its existing plans.²⁷² Its narrow boundary precluded any leadership of Sandwell’s sprawling ABI patchwork in the 2000s; but paradoxically, its operational focus on West Bromwich led it to ignore Smethwick in practice.²⁷³ Harking back to BCDC and a physical development approach, Regenco lacked its executive and financial clout, while failing to secure local validity and legitimacy.²⁷⁴ This flaw doomed all three Black Country URCs, according to Henderson.²⁷⁵ Regenco’s utility was sharply questioned in meetings with the author in 2007 and later by the local MP.²⁷⁶ The council closed it in 2009.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁰ Cooper, 'Interviews'; Eling, 'Interviews'; Spellar, 'Interview'; Ponting, 'Interview'; Bubalo, 'Interview'; Bolister, 'Interview'; Nevin, 'Interviews'; Dawson, 'Interview'; Towe, 'Interview'; David Rhead, 'Interview with Author', 1 October 2013; Rohit Mistry, 'Interview with Author', 21 May 2013. Rhead worked at the Black Country Development Corporation and was later Senior Area Manager, Homes and Communities Agency. Mistry was the Neighbourhood Manager for Soho and Victoria Ward in 2008–10 and then Director of Friends and Neighbours CiC.

²⁷¹ The Sandwell URC Task Force Group, reporting in 2002 called for a ‘highly focused, task-driven, independent vehicle for driving forward the large-scale, physical economic transformation of . . . Smethwick, West Bromwich and Hill Top’: RegenCo: Sandwell Urban Regeneration Company, 'Business Plan 2007/08 to 2009/10', [corporate document], West Bromwich: RegenCo, 2007, 1.

²⁷² Steven Henderson, 'Urban Regeneration Companies and their Institutional Setting: Prevailing instabilities within the West Midlands, England', *Local Economy*, 29/6–7 (2014), 635–56, 646. This study is a particularly useful examination of the three Black Country URCs.

²⁷³ Nevin, 'Interviews'; White, 'Interview'.

²⁷⁴ Rhead, 'Interview'.

²⁷⁵ Henderson, 'Urban Regeneration Companies', 652.

²⁷⁶ John Spellar, 'Meeting with Author', 27 January 2009.

²⁷⁷ Henderson, 'Urban Regeneration Companies', 649; Bubalo, 'Interview'.

Government designation of Sandwell-Birmingham as a sub-regional housing market renewal scheme was largely a surprise to both authorities.²⁷⁸ Two-thirds of the targeted population and 80 per cent of the most deprived neighbourhoods were in the Birmingham side, but Sandwell was made the accountable body.²⁷⁹ The claimed cross-border logic proved illusory.²⁸⁰ An equal division of spend was expediently agreed, but inter-authority tensions persisted, even though it was supervised by boards which together met 18 times a year.²⁸¹ Those interviewed saw the two councils as instrumentally using Urban Living to fund their preferred activities, and denying it an independent role.²⁸² Eleven inspections by the Audit Commission reached a similar view and it was nearly closed by the government in 2006 on performance grounds.²⁸³ As with Regenco, Urban Living resources supported intervention in West Bromwich, but in Smethwick funded land assembly, masterplanning and piecemeal projects.²⁸⁴ The author's own experience at Urban Living was that the £21m

²⁷⁸ Ian Cole and Brendan Nevin, 'The Road to Renewal: The early development of the housing market renewal pathfinder programme in England', [academic study], York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2004, 11-13; Nevin, 'Interviews'. Note: the author acted as an external consultant to, and was later a manager at Urban Living.

²⁷⁹ The accountable body is the organisation that inner-area responsible for receiving grant funding, ensuring the grant monies are managed effectively and are compliant with any conditions in the grant agreement. Also see Sandwell MBC, 'Roles & Responsibilities of the Accountable Body (Cabinet Forward Plan Ref. No. SR041): Report to the Cabinet Member for Strategic Resources, 21 June 2005', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2005. Population data from Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2001 England and Wales: Key Statistics', Table KS101EW. Data on Urban Living localities ranked in the 5 per cent most deprived areas in England: Department for Communities and Local Government, 'The English Indices of Deprivation 2007', [statistical report], London: CLG, 2007.

²⁸⁰ Nevin, 'Interviews'; Dutton, 'Interview'; Dawson, 'Interview'; Rhead, 'Interview'.

²⁸¹ 'Pathfinder chair to quit following reorganisation', *Regeneration & Renewal*, 28 October 2005.

²⁸² Rhead, 'Interview'; Wilkinson, 'Interview'; Dawson, 'Interview'; Spence, 'Interview'. Sandwell MBC's scrutiny review argued: 'Many stakeholders made useful suggestions for how Urban Living could improve its performance [including] "Urban Living should identify more clearly how it can support the strategic objectives of the two Councils. It should act as an enabler and catalyst rather than irritant"': Sandwell MBC, 'Review of Urban Living: Partnerships and External Scrutiny Panel, Sandwell MBC', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2007, 19.

²⁸³ See Audit Commission reports in the bibliography, but in particular: Audit Commission, 'Market Renewal: Urban Living', [government report], *Strategic Review: February 2006*, London: Audit Commission, 2006, 10. A useful wider critique of the difficulties faced by the market renewal partnerships is Ian Cole, 'Housing Market Renewal and Demolition in England in the 2000s: The governance of "wicked problems"', *International Journal of Housing Policy*, 12/3 (2012), 347-66.

²⁸⁴ Urban Living: Birmingham-Sandwell Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder, 'Urban Living Review 2003-2011: A Story of Regeneration', [council report], Smethwick: Urban Living, 2011, 22-26, 35.

spent in Smethwick was a balancing item for Sandwell MBC to soak up its 50 per cent Urban Living funding 'envelope'.

Regenco and Urban Living duly became synonymous with production of studies and masterplans, mainly by consultants.²⁸⁵ A related perception was the 'middle-class welfare' of officer empires spawned by a 'regeneration industry' and elsewhere termed 'benevolent expertism'.²⁸⁶ Sixty studies for Smethwick were identified.²⁸⁷ The paradox of Windmill Lane residents 'experiencing' repeated masterplanning, but not obtaining a neighbourhood plan until 2011 is discussed in Chapter 5. While it reflected the contemporary fashion for 'evidence-based approaches', it illustrated a failure to embed and utilise institutional knowledge and relationships in Sandwell.²⁸⁸ The 'paralysis by analysis' identified by Garrett lost irreplaceable momentum, legitimacy and time in the best-funded decade of UK urban

²⁸⁵ Henderson, 'Urban Regeneration Companies', 648. Other commentary from Spellar, 'Meeting'. Also Cooper, 'Interviews'; Eling, 'Interviews'; Young, 'Interviews'; Dawson, 'Interview'; Dutton, 'Interview'; Garrett, 'Interview'; Bubalo, 'Interview'; Khamis, 'Interviews'; White, 'Interview'; Jeffrey, 'Interview'. From a total lifetime spend of £142.7m by Urban Living, £16.6m was expended on 'project support/infrastructure', which covered the establishment costs for the Urban Living core team, interim managers and related staff at the two local authorities. It also spent £2.9m on masterplanning and £1.3m on research: Urban Living: Birmingham-Sandwell Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder, 'Urban Living Review', 36. Urban Living commissioned or directly undertook 98 research studies: Urban Living: Birmingham-Sandwell Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder, 'Research Compendium, October 2010', [council report], Smethwick: Urban Living, Research Team, 2010.

²⁸⁶ The 'middle-class welfare' phrase is Spellar's: Spellar, 'Meeting'; 'Severn, 'Interview'; Ponting, 'Interview'; Spence, 'Interview'; Spellar, 'Meeting'; Josan, 'Interview'; Page, 'Interview'; Dutton, 'Interview'. The expression 'benevolent expertism' is from Rob Imrie, 'Governing the Cities and the Urban Renaissance', in Craig Johnstone and Mark Whitehead (eds.), *New Horizons in British Urban Policy: Perspectives on New Labour's urban renaissance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 138.

²⁸⁷ Dutton cited a commissioning proposal passed to him, as an Executive Director at Newham Council, for a Royal Docks masterplan, which included a list of 71 previous masterplans, frameworks and studies: Clive Dutton, 'Smethwick plan proliferation and the 71 Newham studies', [personal communication to author], 27 November 2013. For a list of the 60 Smethwick studies see Special Note 29: Smethwick 'Masterplans' and their Legacy.

²⁸⁸ Mistry, 'Interview'.

regeneration.²⁸⁹ And in a further paradox, no town-specific, local planning framework was adopted for Smethwick after 1960 until 2008.²⁹⁰

Spellar argued: 'The role of an agency is to cut through, to fund the shortcuts to move things along. Otherwise I'm not sure why they're there; you might as well give it to Sandwell Council'.²⁹¹ But he also observed that Urban Living became the 'alibi' for a wider public sector failure. The coalition government ended the national market renewal programme prematurely in 2010, with Urban Living the only one of nine schemes where the constituent local authorities did not lobby for continued funding.²⁹² Both major delivery vehicles were now gone; the council's role reinforced by national 'austerity-localism' (Chapter 2).

A study of the West Midlands highlighted the hierarchical control meanwhile exercised by government office and the RDA over local schemes, informed by 'ideological blueprints for regeneration'.²⁹³ Chatterton and Bradley noted the unwillingness of business-led RDAs to 'get below the surface of the problem'.²⁹⁴ It was argued the West Midlands RDA made limited progress with its 'regenerating communities' objective (its other three objectives were economic).²⁹⁵ Equally Regenco, being 'insufficiently embedded in place', lacked community criteria for investment decisions; reportedly believing that benefits would

²⁸⁹ Garrett, 'Interview'.

²⁹⁰ See Special Note 28: Sandwell Planning Policy relating to Smethwick.

²⁹¹ Spellar, 'Meeting'.

²⁹² Nevin, 'Interviews'; 'Midlands HMR body plots break-up', *Regeneration & Renewal*, 27 September 2010.

²⁹³ Whitehead, 'Shadow of Hierarchy', 10-11. Also see Jonathan S. Davies, 'The governance of urban regeneration: a critique of the "governing without government" thesis', *Public Administration*, 80/2 (2002), 301-22.

²⁹⁴ Chatterton and Bradley, 'Bringing Britain Together?', 103.

²⁹⁵ Khamis, 'Interviews'; Ian Waddell, 'Interview with Author', 26 September 2007. Waddell was a fellow director of CSR Partnership with the author.

‘trickle-down’.²⁹⁶ Urban Living continued to be criticised for limited community engagement activity five years into its life, although it was eventually to address this, particularly in Birmingham.²⁹⁷

In this environment, the loss of SRP and the proliferation of regeneration initiatives after 2003 weakened partnerships and community engagement in Smethwick and Sandwell. The council in 1999 established town committees and town teams as a vehicle for local engagement in Sandwell, although its commitment was ambiguous.²⁹⁸ The ‘six towns’ concept was implemented through the council’s new Neighbourhood Strategy from 2000, but place structures were reliant on external funding (NRF in this case). SRP itself reflected Sandwell’s early work on the ‘six towns’, but likewise was dependent on SRB4 resources. The Smethwick town committee solely comprised ward councillors; the team comprised council and partner agency officers. Previous SRP linkage to the private and voluntary sectors was lost.²⁹⁹ With the end of NRF in 2008, the team was scaled-back to a single officer by 2012.³⁰⁰ In 2009, the council reported that public interest in town committees had dwindled and they were wound-up.³⁰¹ Instead, a town lead member role was established, with a link to area directors in the council executive after 2011.³⁰²

²⁹⁶ CSK Strategies, ‘Community Cohesion Strategy’, [consultancy report], 2009. , 14; Khamis, ‘Interviews’. The ‘insufficiently embedded in place’ quote is from Henderson, ‘Urban Regeneration Companies’, 651.

²⁹⁷ See Special Note 32: Urban Living and Community Engagement.

²⁹⁸ Sandwell MBC, ‘Town Member Panel Pilot: Report to Policy and Corporate Strategy Committee, 15 April 1999’, [council report], 1999. See SN 31: The ‘Six Towns’.

²⁹⁹ Khamis, ‘Interviews’. Also see SN 31: The ‘Six Towns’.

³⁰⁰ Santokh Singh, ‘Interview with Author’, 21 May 2014. Singh was Smethwick town manager after 2008.

³⁰¹ Sandwell MBC, ‘Appointment to Executive Offices and the Constitution of Committee, Panels and other Fora 2009/10: Council Agenda Papers, 19 May 2009’, [council report], 2009.

³⁰² Cooper, ‘Interviews’; Bubalo, ‘Interview’; Roger Horton, ‘Interview with Author’, 31 July 2013; Horton was a Sandwell Labour councillor for Victoria ward in 1975–79 and for Soho and Victoria ward after 1979. Also see SN 31: The ‘Six Towns’.

To conclude this section, regeneration in Sandwell conformed to the national pattern, where ‘constant change in institutions, policies and governance arrangements was the norm’ (Chapter 2).³⁰³ The council gained credibility as a ‘capable player’ with national and regional government after the 1987–92 watershed, winning substantial funding in the ‘regeneration game’. Sandwell had an uneasy, instrumental approach to later delivery vehicles, albeit one common to the Birmingham-Black Country councils. Early housing schemes fostered a perception of disproportionate regeneration effort in Smethwick, but the reality was ‘scatter-gun’ ABI coverage; where ‘Sandwell started badly on too many fronts and was unable to complete them’.³⁰⁴ SRB4 was a ‘bottom-up’ groundswell, which transformed a small, people-based scheme into an authentic place-based partnership for Smethwick; but terminated through spatial indecision and the ‘politics of envy’. As spending accelerated, Smethwick was left ‘in limbo’, because ‘attention transferred to West Bromwich’.³⁰⁵ This controlling approach nevertheless lacked ‘conjoining command’; the stream of area masterplans being a visible symptom, just as local partnerships were lost.

³⁰³ Stephen Syrett and David North, ‘Between Economic Competitiveness and Social Inclusion: New Labour and the economic revival of deprived neighbourhoods’, *Local Economy*, 25/5–6 (2010), 476–93, 489. Also quoted in Chapter 2.

³⁰⁴ Nevin, ‘Interviews’.

³⁰⁵ The full quote being: ‘Smethwick has been much more in limbo since then [SRB4] because of the transfer of attention – I think that’s the right word – the attention has transferred to West Bromwich’: Towe, ‘Interview’.

Conclusions

This review of local governance identifies, respectively, a paternalistic culture, political expediency and reactive policy, the system-build 'lock-in', crisis management, spatial incoherence and partnership mistrust. It demonstrated a path-dependent, 'systemic problem around governance'.³⁰⁶ So for regeneration in the 2000s, 'Sandwell couldn't cope with the scale of the opportunities it had: the reverse problem of when it was in crisis!'³⁰⁷ Although a reliable recipient of regeneration funding, Sandwell was variously judged a 'poor' or 'one-star' council in the 2000s.³⁰⁸ The position of Smethwick within Sandwell was ambiguous: the contested narrative of Smethwick being privileged by investment an example. Smethwick appeared, paradoxically, to be just a 'geographical expression' but with its councillors retaining political significance within the controlling Labour Group.³⁰⁹ Ambiguity about place doomed the council's limited 'six towns' concept to failure, setting the scene for 'centralised localism' after 2010, in a one-party state. This ambiguity complicates an assessment of the 'local dimension' shaping Smethwick after the 1966/74 reorganisations. The role and impact of the local state was greater nowhere than in the Soho and Victoria area of Smethwick. To answer fully the research question of governance effectiveness, a locality-within-a-locality approach is therefore helpful. The next chapter analyses the long-term neighbourhood outcomes in two localities.

³⁰⁶ Nevin, 'Interviews'.

³⁰⁷ Nevin, 'Interviews'.

³⁰⁸ See Audit Commission, 'Audit and Inspection 2002/2003: Annual Letter, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council', [government report], London: Audit Commission, 2003; Audit Commission, '2004 Annual Audit and Inspection Letter: Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council', [government report], London: Audit Commission, 2005; Audit Commission, 'Annual Audit and Inspection Letter: Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, March 2007', [government report], London: Audit Commission, 2007; Audit Commission, 'Annual Audit and Inspection Letter: Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, March 2008', [government report], London: Audit Commission, 2008.

³⁰⁹ Merely a 'geographical expression' is popularly attributed to Metternich in describing pre-unification Italy.

CHAPTER 5 NEIGHBOURHOOD OUTCOMES IN WINDMILL LANE AND BLACK PATCH

Windmill Lane typified the early fate of system-built estates located at the bottom of the neighbourhood hierarchy in UK cities and undermined by deindustrialisation. Black Patch illustrated an existential dilemma in restructuring a complex urban form. This chapter further examines the local dimension, in the different histories of these two localities in the Soho and Victoria area of Smethwick (Figure 5.1). The first three sections cover the redevelopment and decline of Windmill Lane to 1988; the government's Housing Action Trust (HAT) designation and the local response; and the period after 1995. Black Patch is addressed in the final section.

5.1 'Riddled with problems': Redevelopment and decline of Windmill Lane to 1988

Windmill Lane became the shorthand for an arc of postwar council housing across Soho and Victoria, seen as a 'problem area' and designated for a HAT.¹ Yet neither of the council and government-funded consultancy studies produced to contest the HAT issue told the story of the area.² A 'significant transient' and 'destabilised population' was cited by Price Waterhouse, together with a reported consensus among local business stakeholders that

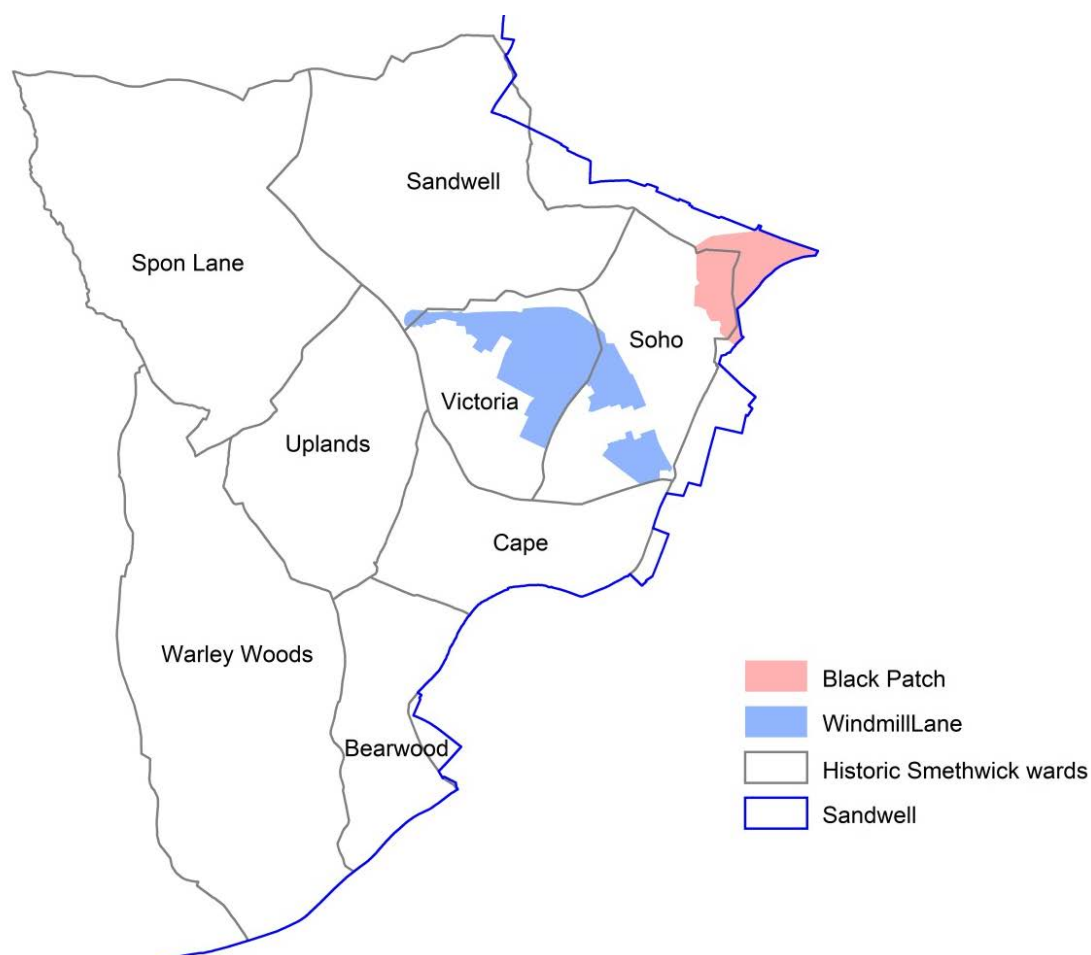
¹ Steve Eling, 'Interviews with Author', 18 July and 11 September 2013. Eling was a Sandwell Labour councillor for Abbey ward from 1986, deputy leader with responsibility for finance, past chair/cabinet member for regeneration, vice chair of housing, and chair of the Tipton and Smethwick regeneration partnerships. See Special Note 34: Neighbourhood Hierarchy and Stigma in Smethwick.

² Price Waterhouse, 'Main Report: Proposed Sandwell Housing Action Trust: Report of the study by a team led by independent consultants Price Waterhouse', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Department of the Environment, West Midlands Regional Office, 1988; PROBE, 'Windmill Lane and Lion Farm: Regeneration proposals', [consultancy report], n.p.: PROBE, 1989.

the 'estate lacks the capacity to escape from a cycle of low performance and expectations'.³

The study did not set out how longstanding the issues were, whose expectations were so low, or how it constituted a 'cycle' beyond referring to it as 'run-down'.⁴ Price Waterhouse returned to Windmill Lane in 2007 to issue a similar ahistorical and inward-looking judgment.⁵ Here an alternative, long-term view focussing on local authority stewardship is offered, dealing firstly with the period up to the attempted HAT.

Figure 5.1: Location of Windmill Lane and Black Patch in Smethwick



Source: Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. Landmark Information Group Ltd/EDINA and UK Data Service products. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

³ Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Main Report', para 18-19, 135.

⁴ Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Main Report', para 39.

⁵ PricewaterhouseCoopers, 'Windmill Eye Feasibility Study: Draft report', [consultancy report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2007. This report is discussed in section 5.3.

The Soho and Victoria areas had developed organically for more than a hundred years, but by 1945 much was deemed 'slum-housing' (Figure 5.2). Roberts later described the dilapidation and widespread poverty, but also the sense of hopefulness she encountered as a district nurse in late 1940s.⁶ Clearance eventually removed 94 per cent of this housing in Victoria and 66 per cent in Soho.⁷ By 1977, Smethwick Corporation and successor local authorities had built 2,792 dwellings (Figure 5.3). This included sixteen tower blocks and 57 medium-rise, 'walk-up' blocks.⁸ Only 23 per cent was low-rise; just seven per cent used traditional construction methods.⁹ The earliest tower blocks were the eleven-storey Murdock and Boulton Place, opened in 1956; with 24-storey Hamilton and Aiken House the tallest and last (Figure 5.4 and Figure 5.5). The net stock change was modest, adding only 459 dwellings (11 per cent) in the two old ward areas in 1951–81 (later Figure 5.23).¹⁰ This nevertheless included a wide variety of build forms and community identities, with differing levels of popularity.¹¹

⁶ Marion Roberts, 'God Bless Yer, Nurse!', *The Blackcountryman*, 41/2 (2008), 11–4, 12.

⁷ Data for the period 1951 to 2011—see Special Note 25: Scale of Housing Clearance in Smethwick.

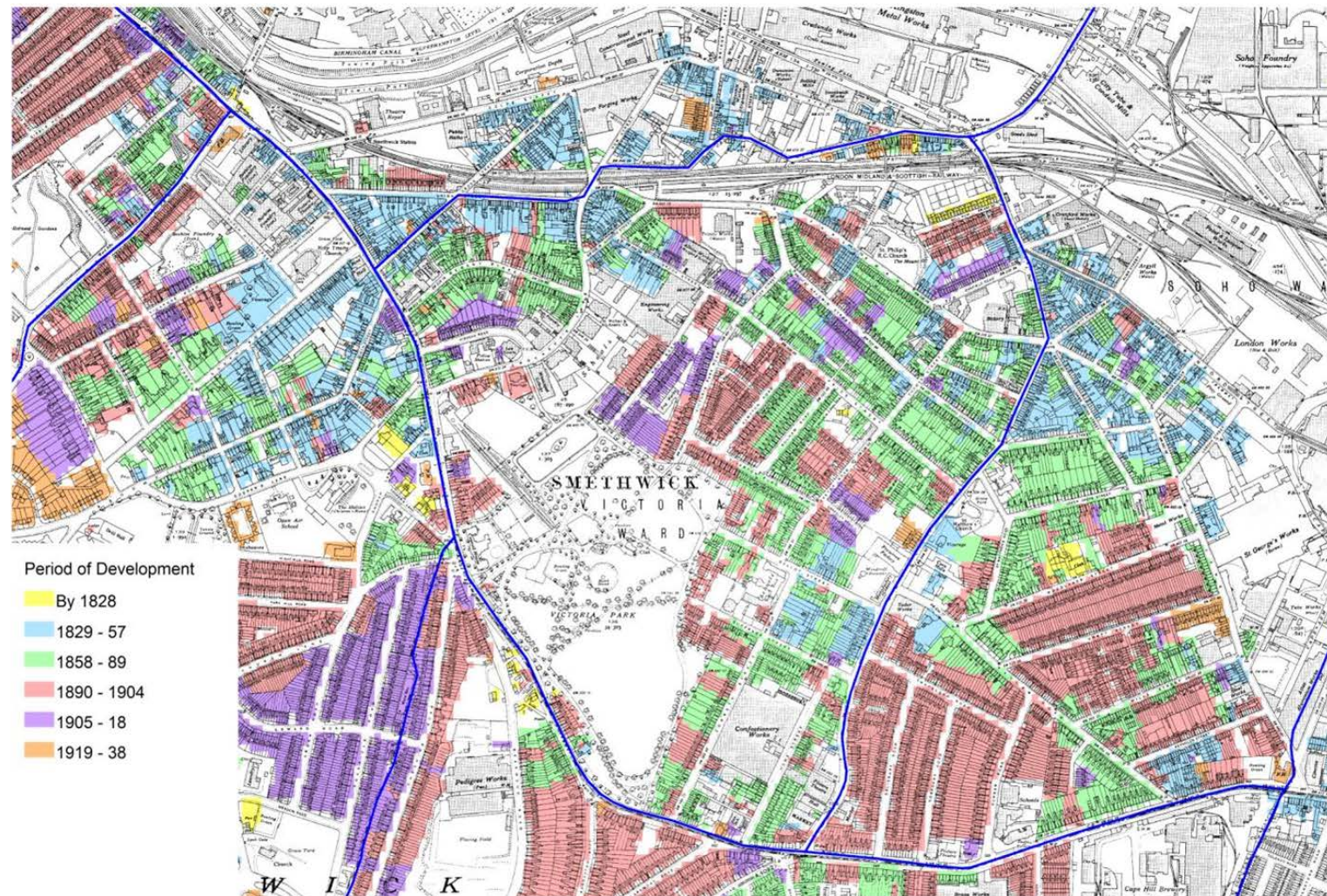
⁸ That is, buildings lacking lifts in blocks of up to five storeys.

⁹ This data is for the Soho and Victoria ward of Sandwell within its 1979–2004 boundary and represents Windmill Lane and Black Patch areas combined: Brendan Nevin, Patrick Loftman *et al.*, 'An Evaluation of the Estate Action Programme at Smethwick', [consultancy report], Birmingham: University of Central England, 1993, 14.

¹⁰ The historic county borough wards of Victoria and Soho—see Special Note 4: Defining Smethwick—Changing boundaries and area identity. The net stock change is discussed in Special Note 6: Housing data for Smethwick.

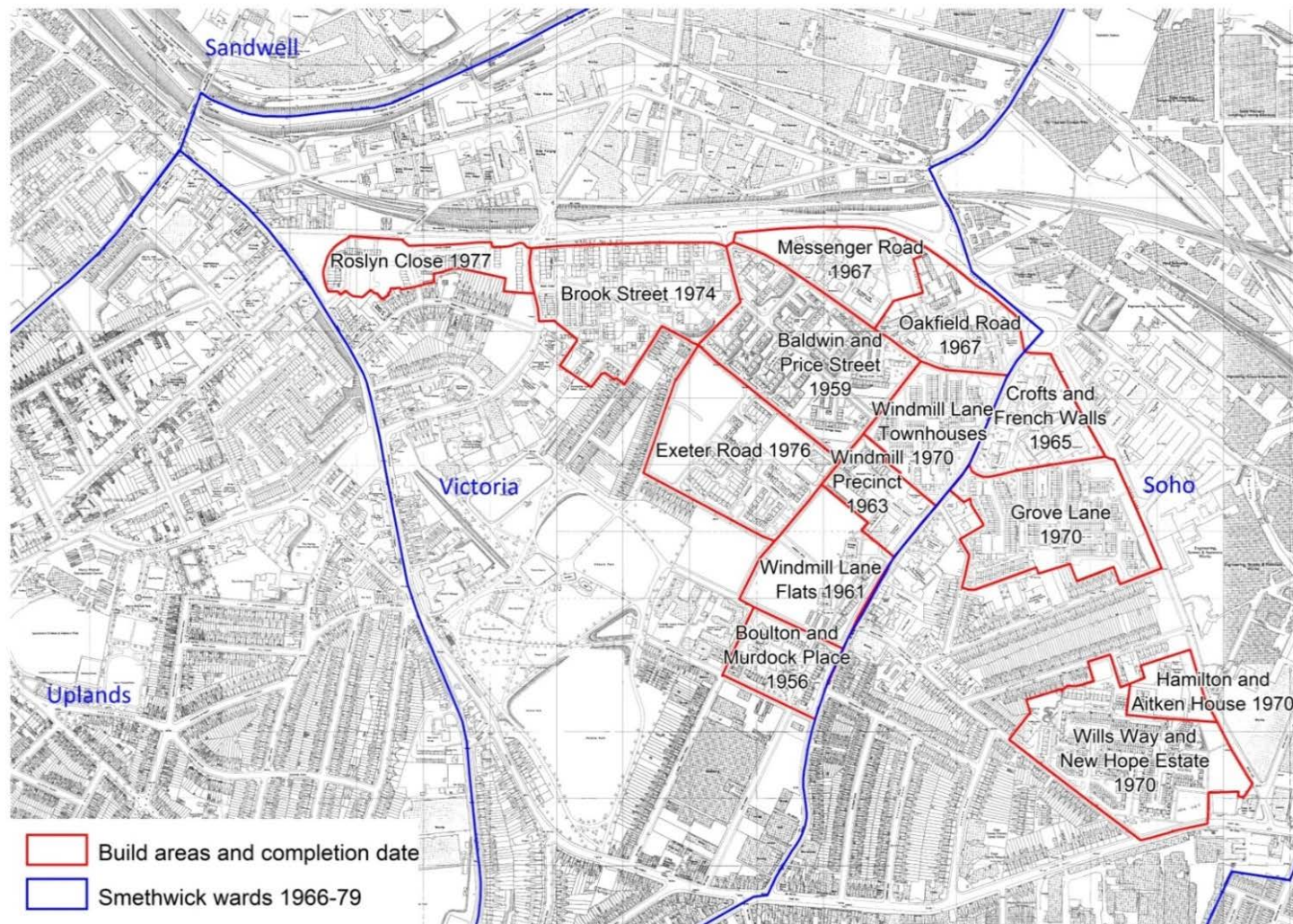
¹¹ See Special Note 35: Soho, Victoria, 'Windmill Lane' and 'Black Patch'.

Figure 5.2: Housing in the Windmill Lane area c.1938



Source: See Special Note 4: Defining Smethwick—Changing boundaries and area identity. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A Landmark Information Group Ltd/EDINA product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153. This map is the closest available to 1945. There was no housebuilding during the war, but some bomb damage in Windmill Lane.

Figure 5.3: Redevelopment of Windmill Lane, 1955–77



Source: See Special Note 4: Defining Smethwick—Changing boundaries and area identity. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A Landmark Information Group Ltd/EDINA product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153. Base map is c.1976, when Roslyn Close was still under development.

Figure 5.4: Boulton and Murdock Place, Windmill Lane, c.1959



Source: 'Boulton and Murdock Place, Windmill Lane', from Smethwick Corporation, *Smethwick Staffordshire: The Official Industrial Handbook*, 1959, 65. © Burrows Communications Ltd. Reproduced with permission of Burrows Communications: Olivia Eisinger, 15 February 2016.

The flawed population projections discussed in Chapter 4 and questionable procurement processes contributed to a serious level of housing oversupply in Windmill Lane. In 1965, Smethwick's Conservative-controlled housing committee approved a redevelopment plan at Wills Street to include five high-rise blocks.¹² It later confirmed a chairman and vice chairman decision that 'an approach be made to John Laing and Sons to undertake the work'.¹³ This fell through and in 1966 the controlling Labour Party in Warley dropped the high-rise component. After a switch in political control in 1967, the housing development committee agreed that negotiations be opened with C. Bryant and Sons, with the 'points arising' to be left to the chairman and vice chairman. It nevertheless asserted: 'Despite [this decision] it is normally the intention of the committee to invite tenders either by advert or from the [approved] list of contractors'.¹⁴ The previous Labour committee chair at Bryant's appointment to build the Windmill Lane flats site later declared an interest in subsequent progress reporting.¹⁵ This governance opacity was unfortunate, given Bryant's later conviction for corrupt payments to Birmingham members and officers associated with negotiated build contracts in 1964–8.¹⁶

¹² Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', [council report], Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, [1920–66], Minute 21: 'Wills Street, Reynolds Street, Cape Hill', meeting held on 8 June 1964.

¹³ Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', Minute 346: 'Wills Street, Reynolds Street, Cape Hill', meeting held on 7 February 1966.

¹⁴ Warley Corporation, 'County Borough of Warley: Minutes of the Housing Development Committee', [council report], Smethwick: Warley Corporation, [1966–74], Minute 175/67: 'Housing Programme', meeting held on 12 June 1967.

¹⁵ Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', Minute 8238: 'Redevelopment Site No.4 (Cheshire Brewery)', meeting held on 25 April 1961. Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', Minute 9088: 'New Church Estate ('Redevelopment Site No.4')', meeting held on 3 April 1964; Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', Minute 9112: 'New Church Estate ('Redevelopment Site No.4')', meeting held on 18 February 1964.

¹⁶ Patrick Dunleavy, *The Politics of Mass Housing in Britain, 1945–1975: a study of corporate power and professional influence in the welfare state* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), 283–6; Anne Power and John Houghton, *Jigsaw Cities Big Places, Small Spaces* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2007), 75.

Bryant built two high-rise blocks and 154 townhouses at Wills Street, in a development criticised for social and environmental problems, due to its 'Radburn' layout.¹⁷ The Soho redevelopment plan envisaged a further seven tower blocks and 22 medium-rise blocks along Windmill Lane and Grove Lane.¹⁸ These blocks were not built under Warley, but alternative Bryant townhouses constructed by 1970 contrasted unfavourably with the build design achieved at Brook and Exeter Street by 1976.¹⁹ Meanwhile the high-rise addition at Wills Street, Hamilton and Aitken, controversial at the time and with the shift in social attitudes already plain, immediately proved difficult-to-let.²⁰ Davis predicted that 'within 20 years there will be plenty of twentieth-century slums'.²¹ Horton felt that after redevelopment, social relationships moved 'down from a street down to a landing' and life in a tower block like Hamilton House could be very isolating.²² Transfer requests outweighed the waiting list at the Windmill Lane multi-storeys by 1972.²³

¹⁷ The 'Radburn' design is typified by the backyards of homes facing the street and the fronts of homes facing each other over common yards. It refers to the design of a 1920s estate in Radburn, New Jersey influenced by the Garden City movement. For its approval in Windmill Lane see: Warley Corporation, 'Housing Development Committee Minutes', Minute 9/68: 'Cape Estate', meeting held on 8 January 1968.

¹⁸ Smethwick Corporation, 'County Borough of Smethwick: Soho Redevelopment Area', 1:1,250 scale, c.1965

¹⁹ Construction issues in the townhouses continued to dominate relations between tenants' groups and ward councillors in the 1970s: Martin Prestidge, 'Interview with Author', 12 July 2013. Prestidge was a Sandwell Labour councillor for Soho ward in Smethwick in 1973-75 and Langley from 1987 to 2012.

²⁰ Peter Wilkinson, 'Interview with Author', 6 June 2013. Wilkinson worked in Sandwell housing department from 1973 to 2007 as an area manager, district housing manager, special projects manager and head of housing strategy.

²¹ 'Aren't They Building Slums Now?', *Warley News Telephone*, 24 April 1969.

²² Roger Horton, 'Interview with Author', 31 July 2013. See also 'Old folk in peril', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 25 May 1978. Horton was a Sandwell Labour councillor for Victoria ward in 1975-79 and for Soho and Victoria ward after 1979.

²³ Warley Corporation, 'Report of Survey: Housing', [council report], *Warley Structure Plan*, Smethwick: Warley Corporation, 1973, 15-16.

Figure 5.5: Hamilton and Aitken House and Wills Way estate, c.1974



Source: 'Local Authority Development – Cape Hill', from Warley Corporation, *Written Statement, Warley Structure Plan*, 1974, 81. © Sandwell MBC. Reproduced with permission of Sandwell Community Histories and Archives Service: Ian Gray, 18 July 2016.

The 'modernist' design of the redeveloped area, together with the way it was resourced and managed by the council, affected both blocks and estate layouts in Windmill Lane from the outset.²⁴ Accidents (some fatal) due to falls from blocks occurred, with council safety maintenance a persistent issue (and see Black Patch below).²⁵ The Windmill Lane maisonettes had internal cavities prone to fires, requiring an extended campaign to

²⁴ Alan Vernon, 'Interview with Author', 2 July 2013; Ken Duffell, 'Interview with Author', 4 July 2013. Vernon was a Conservative councillor for Soho ward on Smethwick Council in 1964–66. Duffell was a Labour councillor for Victoria ward on Warley Council in 1966–68.

²⁵ Sandwell MBC, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, [1974–90], Minute 63/74; 'Accident - 58 Baldwin Street', meeting held on 2 July 1974. See these articles from 1974–78: 'Never-ending headache', *News Telephone*, 9 May 1974; 'Woman fell 50 feet from multi-storey tower block', *News Telephone*, 20 June 1974; 'Estates staff told to tighten up', *News Telephone*, 11 July 1974; 'Pensioner falls to his death', *News Telephone*, 17 April 1975; 'Windows "death trap for kids"', *News Telephone*, 31 July 1975; 'Tenants fear danger flats', *News Telephone*, 16 October 1975; '"Why no child-proof catch?" inquiry demand', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 27 April 1978.

remedy them (Figure 5.6).²⁶ The system-built property types were prone to dampness.²⁷

Later surveys found most people struggled with money and found it hard to heat their typically badly-insulated home.²⁸ The flats had uninviting and scruffy entrances, with dirty and vandalised stairs and lifts, with failed or no security systems allowing easy intruder access.²⁹ The lifts at Hamilton House reportedly failed 73 times in four months in 1978.³⁰

²⁶ David Hallam, 'Interview with Author', 11 June 2013; 'Residents fear fire threat', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 8 July 1976; 'Skylight fire escapes plea', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 19 January 1978. Hallam was a Sandwell Labour councillor for Victoria ward from 1976–79.

²⁷ By 1962, the Smethwick housing committee was preoccupied by the issue of damp in the Wimpey 'no-fines' blocks at Boulton and Murdock Place, and Baldwin and Price Street: Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', Minute 19143: 'Redevelopment Site No. 2', meeting held on 12 March 1962. Following a review, the corporation informed the public: 'The trouble was condensation and not either rising damp or water penetration. The remedy for condensation is the right combination of ventilation and heating': 'Dampness in blocks of flats', *Smethwick Civic News*, February 1964. This continued through to Sandwell, with periodic remedial efforts punctuated by blaming tenants for condensation. See these Baldwin and Price Street articles: 'Life a misery in fungus flat', *News Telephone*, 20 February 1975; "'Damp homes not tenants' fault'", *News Telephone*, 10 April 1975; 'Mum "at her wits end" over hole in the roof', *News Telephone*, 3 July 1975; 'More damp complaints', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 22 March 1979.

²⁸ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', Table 16 after 45. Also Ged Lucas, 'Presentation on Housing to Abbey Branch Labour Party', [opinion piece], 14 November 1995.

²⁹ 'Tenants demand entrycom system', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 11 June 1980.

³⁰ The council found in 1976 that 50 per cent of breakdowns were due to vandalism or misuse, but it declined to install vandal-proof lifts at a cost of £24,000: Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 101/76; 'Condition of lifts at Aitken and Hamilton House, Wills Way, Smethwick', meeting of the Housing Management Sub-Committee held on 12 July 1976. The problem therefore continued: 'Faulty lifts—Rent threat', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 16 March 1978; 'Marooned by lifts', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 18 May 1978; 'Faulty lifts—Report on way', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 18 May 1978. Frequent and prolonged lift breakdown in Hamilton House was reportedly still a problem in 1988–89: Aynols Reid, 'Interview with Author', 13 February 2014. Reid was a Windmill Lane resident active in 'Friends and Neighbours' and a former chair of Cape Hill and Windmill Area Sure Start.

Figure 5.6: Windmill Lane flats, 1979



Source: 'Windmill Lane Flats', from <<http://jubilee.plmcreative.netdna-cdn.com/wpcontent/uploads/2015/03/smethwick2.jpg?4085fa>>, 1979. © Jubilee Arts Archive 1974–1994. Reproduced under the terms of the Creative Commons licence 'Attribution Non-commercial' (CC BY-NC). Accessed 29 January 2016. View from Murdock Place, with the fire-risk maisonettes visible in the centre.

The Radburn townhouses meanwhile provided pedestrian-only front access, with rear-access or distant garages for cars.³¹ The paths to them were badly-lit and avoided. Many roads were cul-de-sacs, deterring through-use and making the housing conspicuous as council enclaves.³² Windmill Lane had too much land, around one-third, as ill-defined public space with no purpose, combined with minimal enclosure around dwellings and absence of secure private gardens (Figure 5.7).³³ In a fine example of 'public landlordism', the council

³¹ Reid, 'Interview'.

³² Horton, 'Interview'; DEGW, 'Appendix VI (ii) Report of Suggested Physical Changes: Proposed Sandwell Housing Action Trust: Report of the study by a team led by independent consultants Price Waterhouse', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Department of the Environment, West Midlands Regional Office, 1988, 2.

³³ Hallam, 'Interview'; Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Main Report', para 146. Price Waterhouse, 'Proposed Sandwell Housing Action Trust: Report of the supplementary study of the wider Cape Hill area by a team led by independent consultants Price Waterhouse', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Department of the Environment, West Midlands Regional Office, 1989, para 137, 139-143.

continued a prohibition in 'open-plan' estates on residents instituting fencing or hedges around their homes.³⁴ Lack of 'defensible space' undermined the notion of the public street, where passers-by or home onlookers provided informal control.³⁵ There were few shops or recreational activities, especially for children, although remedying such deficiencies proved difficult.³⁶ The tower blocks made Windmill Lane into a 'wind tunnel'.³⁷ The sense of place, its physical coherence and the identity and feeling of community were lost in the protracted redevelopment, it was argued, with social responsibility undermined.³⁸

Such 'place' issues, which worsened over time due to underinvestment and damage, were compounded by equivocal attitudes to resident involvement.³⁹ It reflected the public landlordism of a weak and overloaded housing function in the local authority (Chapters 2

³⁴ Comments reported at the committee included a view that differing personal tastes 'would result in some very odd fencing if tenants were allowed to erect their own'; and that 'it would cause problems where we have the responsibility of mowing the grass': "'No" to fences on open-plan estates', *News Telephone*, 3 June 1975.

³⁵ Hallam, 'Interview'; Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Main Report', para 148.

³⁶ Hallam, 'Interview'; Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Main Report', para 18, 101. Also see Special Note 38: Play Facilities at Wills Way, Windmill Lane.

³⁷ This was due to the 'downwash' and 'channelling' effect between the blocks, which was worse when blocks directly faced the prevailing south-west wind, such as the Crofts.

³⁸ Eling, 'Interviews'; Duffell, 'Interview'; Vernon, 'Interview'; Wilkinson, 'Interview'; Richard Young, 'Interviews with Author', 31 May 2012, 25 September 2013 and 23 April 2014; Darren Cooper, 'Meeting with Author', 11 February 2008; Steve Lodder, 'Interview with Author', 25 June 2013; Young was a Labour councillor for Bristnall ward in 1991–2004 and vice chair of housing, chair of finance and deputy leader of Sandwell who also lived in Windmill Lane. Cooper was a Sandwell Labour councillor for Soho and Victoria ward after 1991 and council leader from 2010 who also grew up Windmill Lane. Lodder worked in Sandwell housing department from 1973–2007 and was area and then district housing manager for Smethwick in 1980–98. Also see Hunt Thompson Associates and Raynesford and Morris, 'Cape Hill Renewal Area: Community planning weekend, 15–18 November 1990', [consultancy report], London: Hunt Thompson Associates, 1990, 50, 52.

³⁹ Wilkinson, 'Interview'. See excellent full-page article: 'Tenants seek truce and a big voice—but will their demands be met?', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 2 March 1978. In a fine example of public landlordism, the housing committee rejected an officer proposal to individually name the blocks at Baldwin and Price Street: Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 25/78; 'Flats at Messenger Road/Price Street, Smethwick', meeting of the Housing Management Sub-Committee held on 2 February 1978. The committee instead resolved 'that the flats numbers of each block be clearly marked thereon'. This perhaps was progress from 1963, when after a site visit, Smethwick councillors refused such a request from the local medical committee: Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', Minute 19931, 'Numbering of Dwellings', meeting held on 11 July 1963. In 1981, the committee disregarded a survey of residents undertaken by the housing department, but agreed to consult the local tenants' association about suitable names: Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 235/81; 'Naming of Council Flats, Messenger Road, Smethwick', meeting held on 28 September 1981. Yet the brutalist 'Block A', 'Block B' . . . designation remained until their eventual demolition.

and 4). Clapham observed that housing management is also a political activity, because of the power relationship with tenants in areas of social stress.⁴⁰ Here Hirschman's model of 'exit', 'voice' and 'loyalty' is a way of understanding community responses to organisational failure.⁴¹ Local tenants' associations pursued 'voice' in the face of estate decline, but resulting in activist burnout.⁴² Relations with the council worsened, with one association fielding election candidates.⁴³ Hallam contended their discussions with him were also marked by individual transfer-lobbying.⁴⁴ The date-order waiting list system, which continued from Smethwick days into early Sandwell, resulted in families with children 'serving their sentence' in flats or maisonettes until a house became available (Hirschman's 'exit').⁴⁵ Eling argued this reduced commitment to the area: 'People were just waiting to move out and leave it behind – not to make it better'.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ David Clapham, 'The Social Construction of Housing Management Research', *Urban Studies*, 34/5–6 (1997), 761–74, 765. To illustrate this point, the Smethwick housing committee decided that a meeting request from a tenants' association would only be considered following disclosure of the proportion of eligible tenants who were fully paid-up association members: Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', Minute 19451: 'Tenants' Association', meeting held on 8 October 1962.

⁴¹ A. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970); cited in Derrick Purdue, 'Community Leadership Cycles and Neighbourhood Governance', in Ian Smith, Eileen Lepine *et al.* (eds.), *Disadvantaged by Where You Live? Neighbourhood governance in contemporary urban policy* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2007); 127, 134.

⁴² 'Now, everyone wants to help now it's too late . . .', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 22 December 1977; "'Group folding" rumour quashed', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 29 December 1977; 'Tenants' group in fight for life', *News Telephone*, 30 August 1984.

⁴³ 'Tenants group declares "war" on the council', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 9 September 1976; 'Election sabotage', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 14 October 1976; 'Flats safety "passing buck"', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 28 October 1978; 'Keep it up, tenants tell MP Andrew', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 6 January 1977; 'Meeting promised, so strike dropped', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 26 January 1978.

⁴⁴ Hallam, 'Interview'.

⁴⁵ Darren Cooper, 'Interviews with Author', 10 July and 11 September 2013; Eling, 'Interviews'. Surveys undertaken in 1988–89 found that despite its mainly flatted nature, 41 to 43 per cent of the estate was let to families with children: Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Main Report', para 89, 91; Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Cape Hill Study', para 65, 72.

⁴⁶ Eling, 'Interviews'.

Figure 5.7: Windmill Lane flats, early 1980s



Source: 'Windmill Lane Flats, early 1980s', [Colour photograph], from <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=516080285118383&set=o.493620380687527&type=1&theater> Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, *Facebook*, 29 April 2013. © Kevin Byng. Reproduced with permission of SHCT: Kevin Byng, 14 February 2016. View from Charles Spragg House, showing five of the eight tower blocks on Windmill Lane itself, and Windmill Precinct next to formless area of open space.

Power's work stressed the estate-level linkage between 'management failure, poor design and social disintegration' (Chapter 2).⁴⁷ Crime and anti-social behaviour issues characterised Windmill Lane from the outset.⁴⁸ The Police Superintendent covering Smethwick reportedly said: 'it is no exaggeration to say that some tower blocks are virtually unpolicable'.⁴⁹ Crime and anti-social behaviour appeared to peak in Soho and Victoria around 1994; in some categories with the highest rates in Sandwell.⁵⁰ Ward councillors and

⁴⁷ Anne Power, *Estates on the Edge: The social consequences of mass housing in Northern Europe* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 109.

⁴⁸ See Special Note 39: Crime and Social Stress in Windmill Lane.

⁴⁹ 1986 letter from the local Police Superintendent to the council, cited in Brendan Nevin, Patrick Loftman, and Alan Middleton, 'The Black Country Development Corporation and the Sandwell Housing Action Trust: An impact assessment of central government initiatives on the local urban policy frame', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Birmingham Polytechnic, Faculty of the Built Environment, 1991, 101-2.

⁵⁰ See SN 39: Crime in Windmill Lane.

police resorted to co-locating advice surgeries at the Council House.⁵¹ But Eling felt ‘not every block was a ‘no-go’ zone so to speak’, especially where more sensitive lettings policy fostered ‘mature blocks’.⁵² Crime levels are heavily influenced by reporting and recording norms.⁵³ Clapham also argued police were largely absent from riot-affected urban areas in the 1980s, entering to make arrests and quickly leaving, while resorting to area stereotyping.⁵⁴ Smethwick police warned of the local potential for a riot.⁵⁵ Eling nonetheless identified the corrosive internal impact of high crime on energy and morale.⁵⁶ The impression of police and criminal justice failings alongside council neglect stigmatised Windmill Lane externally as well.⁵⁷

The eventual completion of Windmill Lane coincided with accelerating population and job losses in Smethwick and increasing poverty (Chapter 3). Windmill Lane was comparable to Meadowell in South Shields, where its specific estate history exposed it to ‘profound changes in socio-spatial structure’ to become ‘the worst element in the housing stock of a large metropolitan district’ (Chapter 2).⁵⁸ By 1974, inflow to Windmill Lane came from people with no choice (‘push factors’), not via the waiting list or moving to Smethwick

⁵¹ Horton, 'Interview'.

⁵² Such as Cheshire House and the Crofts: Eling, 'Interviews'. It felt safe, even at night, in the 1980s to Garrett as a patch-based social worker: John Garrett, 'Interview with Author', 24 June 2013. Garrett was a social worker in Smethwick in the 1980s and later Deputy Chief Executive of Sandwell MBC. Also see SN 39: Crime in Windmill Lane.

⁵³ Michelle Norris and Cathal O' Connell, 'Decline and Renewal of Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods: Old insights, new evidence and policy implications', *Planning Practice & Research*, 29/4 (2014), 370–87, 375.

⁵⁴ Clapham, 'Housing Management Research'; 770. Also see Power, *Estates on the Edge*, 299.

⁵⁵ 'Violence could erupt, warns police chief', *News Telephone*, 7 August 1986.

⁵⁶ Eling, 'Interviews'.

⁵⁷ 'Police chief to be told of great concern', *News Telephone*, 28 November 1985; 'See us about it tomorrow, police tell snatch victim', *Daily Mail*, 28 March 1994. Also see Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Main Report', para 98-99; Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 48.

⁵⁸ David Byrne, 'Book reviews. Meadowell: The Biography of an "Estate with Problems"', M. Barke and G. Turnbull. Aldershot: Avebury, 1992', *Housing Studies*, 8/1 (1993), 70–1.

(‘pull factors’).⁵⁹ According to Wilkinson, the highest voids in early Sandwell were persistently in Windmill Lane, in ‘the high-rise and less-desirable maisonettes that needed to be filled’.⁶⁰ This shaped its reputation and position as the ‘worst element’ in the Sandwell housing stock.⁶¹

The lettings practice of so-called ‘dumping’ arose in this environment.⁶² Widely identified in press coverage at the time and retrospectively in the oral histories, it remains an elusive process.⁶³ It is unclear to what extent it was formal policy or micro-operational, how long it lasted, or how confined to Windmill Lane, but it was a pernicious dynamic.⁶⁴ Some interviewees saw it as a form of social control through the paternalistic culture.⁶⁵ Lucas explained ‘dumping’ as occurring where housing quality was inherently uneven; access to popular social stock highly restricted; and subject to notions of relative ‘deservingness’. Rehousing after eviction in the case of families was a social responsibility and alternative council accommodation was manifestly cost-effective, compared to placing children into care. It needed a ready-void and given the reduced social entitlement implicit in an eviction, a flat in a low-demand estate would be the outcome.⁶⁶

⁵⁹ Hallam, 'Interview'.

⁶⁰ Wilkinson, 'Interview'. Also see Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 175/87: 'Housing Investment Programme 1988/89, Appendix 1', meeting held on 15 July 1987.

⁶¹ Kearns and Parkinson suggested that long-term reputational problems arise when a neighbourhood is perceived as a place where people can become ‘trapped’ either in bureaucratic or market allocation system: Ade Kearns and Michael Parkinson, 'The Significance of Neighbourhood', *Urban Studies*, 38/12 (2001), 2103–10, 2105.

⁶² Wilkinson, 'Interview'.

⁶³ Smethwick's MP, Andrew Faulds described ‘dumping’ as ‘socially damaging’ in a newspaper article. He said: ‘The council has not admitted there is a policy of rehousing problem families there, but it appears in action that they do this’: ‘Problem families—“Change Policy” – MP’, *Smethwick News Telephone*, 30 July 1981.

⁶⁴ The issue of ‘problem families’ in West Smethwick was discussed in Chapter 4.

⁶⁵ Young, 'Interviews'; Duffell, 'Interview'; Hallam, 'Interview'; Brendan Nevin, 'Interviews with Author', 6 August and 24 September 2013, 7 September 2015. Nevin was a researcher and government adviser and previous head of housing strategy in Sandwell.

⁶⁶ Ged Lucas, 'Interview with Author', 17 October 2013. Lucas was Director of Housing in Sandwell from 1992–97. A 1988 council report said ‘the Windmill Lane, Galton Village [West Smethwick] and Black Patch housing

The concentration of people with the least choice—in some cases with dysfunctional lifestyles—in high-density environments was highly damaging.⁶⁷ It contributed to major rent arrears and very high levels of tenancies ending through abandonment and eviction, where the property might be left vandalised.⁶⁸ Lodder said, ‘There was this compunction to fill them up in any way you could and this created more voids’ and a ‘massive churn-rate’.⁶⁹ This ‘self-reinforcing sequence’ was described by Hallam: ‘Basically people wanted to get out. And the people who were coming in were not the people who the people who wanted to get out wanted to live with. And that was where the pressures were’.⁷⁰ While this reported view appears, on the available evidence, to be ‘right’ it is also problematic. We cannot know what it felt like to live in Windmill Lane at that time: the ‘inchoate sensibilities’ as people got on with ordinary life.⁷¹ Everyday continuity can be underestimated.⁷²

areas contain very heavy concentrations of child abuse and other social problems’: Sandwell MBC, ‘The Smethwick Initiative: Report to Policy Committee, 3 July 1989’, [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 1989. Also see: ‘Don’t send him to jail, pleads wife’, *News Telephone*, 17 April 1975; ‘Threw chair at wife in “Missing Cigs” row’, *Smethwick News Telephone*, 8 April 1976.

⁶⁷ Lodder, ‘Interview’. A reported exchange at housing committee captured the policy implication of this issue and is worth quoting in full. Councillor White: ‘Social Services cannot cope and it is up the area manager there that these people are moved’. Councillor Pemberton (committee chair): ‘Moving the problem families elsewhere would merely cause trouble for tenants in other parts of the area’. White: ‘I know this is a delicate matter, but it seems as soon as a suggestion is made, someone says it is not possible and the problem is left’. Quoted in ‘Pram falls from a balcony—yet nobody is bothered . . .’, *Smethwick News Telephone*, 9 November 1980.

⁶⁸ Lodder, ‘Interview’.

⁶⁹ Lodder, ‘Interview’.

⁷⁰ Hallam, ‘Interview’. The concept of self-reinforcing sequences as a path dependency was discussed in Chapter 2.

⁷¹ Ann Stoler, *Along the Architectural Grain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009) quoted in David Parker and Christian Karner, ‘Remembering the Alum Rock Road: Reputational geographies and spatial biographies’, *Midland History*, 36/2 (2011), 292–309, <<http://www.maneyonline.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1179/004772911X13074595849275>>, accessed 15 December 2014, 295.

⁷² Ray Forrest and Ade Kearns, ‘Social Cohesion, Social Capital and the Neighbourhood’, *Urban Studies*, 38/12 (2001), 2125–43, 2126.

The locality trigger for the breakdown of Windmill Lane was Boulton and Murdock Place.⁷³ Despite being heated by open coal fires, Horton recalled: 'in 1956 they were the bee's knees. They were fantastic places compared to what you'd been used to'.⁷⁴ But in a news film in 1970, they appeared in tumult, due to the disruptive impact of numerous children on elderly residents.⁷⁵ In 1978, the site reportedly housed 235 children and the council was never to resolve this conflict. Vandalism, arson, and rubbish-dumping plagued the blocks in this period.⁷⁶ Complaints of dampness and water penetration in the defective 'No-Fines' concrete design—first reported to committee in 1960—continued to be rebuffed (Figure 5.8).⁷⁷ Warley East Labour Party 'launched an investigation' into 'terrible conditions' at 'notorious' Boulton and Murdock Place.⁷⁸ They were described as the 'two worst blocks in Sandwell'.⁷⁹ It was claimed 'the council was filling empty flats with problem families' evicted from the rest of Sandwell.⁸⁰ Two-thirds of Boulton and Murdock Place tenants were in rent arrears.⁸¹

⁷³ Hall referred to the way a cycle of decline may be initiated at the level of the individual building, when voids or unsuitable placements lead to the flight of existing tenants and/or micro-level management difficulties: Peter Hall, 'Regeneration Policies for Peripheral Housing Estates: Inward and outward-looking approaches', *Urban Studies*, 34/5–6 (1997), 873–90, 875.

⁷⁴ Horton, 'Interview'.

⁷⁵ 'Corbett Street flats', Midlands News, 27 August 1970 [Television news broadcast], MACE: <<http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/atv-today-27081970-corbett-street-flats/MediaEntry/14989.html>> accessed 28 August 2014. Also see Monro's recollections in Paul Quigley, 'Living in the Sky: A history of high-rise council flats in the Black Country', [research study], *The Block Capital Project*, Wolverhampton: Wolverhampton Art Gallery, 2015, 17.

⁷⁶ See Special Note 36: Conditions at Boulton and Murdock Place, Windmill Lane.

⁷⁷ The 'No-Fines' concrete design was a mass-production construction method used by Wimpey (Figure 5.8). No-Fines referred to the type of concrete used: concrete with no fine aggregates. On damp see: Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', Minute 7941: 'Redevelopment Site No. 1', meeting held on 8 February 1960; 'These flats are a shower—close them, demand mums', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 5 May 1977; 'Flat "not fit for a tramp"', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 1 March 1979; 'Flat unfit to live in', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 4 January 1982. Also Horton, 'Interview'.

⁷⁸ 'Shocking flats investigation', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 22 September 1977.

⁷⁹ 'Mass exodus from flats?', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 16 February 1978.

⁸⁰ 'Vandal attack triggers off action by infuriated tenants', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 6 April 1978.

⁸¹ 'Houses scheme for high-rise families', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 19 January 1978.

Figure 5.8: Wimpey 'No-Fines' advertisement, 1959

REDEVELOPMENT

The problem of slum clearance and redevelopment in general is one which besets many local authorities at present.

The Wimpey organisation is ideally equipped to carry out such schemes in their entirety, from the initial site investigation and demolition to the completed dwellings.

The Wimpey 'No-Fines' method of construction has already been used to excellent purpose in such vital industrial centres as Birmingham, Bradford, Coventry, Liverpool, and Smethwick, and is readily adaptable to individual and specific requirements.

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Source: 'Redevelopment—George Wimpey & Co. Limited', from Smethwick Corporation, *Smethwick Staffordshire: The Official Industrial Handbook*, 1959, 14. © Burrows Communications Ltd. Reproduced with permission of Burrows Communications: Olivia Eisinger, 15 February 2016.

Windmill Lane was by 1981, according to Eling, an 'absolute sink'.⁸² Nevin judged it was in an 'absolute crisis'.⁸³ This was the assessment in newspaper articles at the time, such as: 'Horror storeys - Estate riddled with problems' and 'Estate One Big Problem'.⁸⁴ Well-publicised vandalism, alleged 'dumping grounds' and estate neglect had spread beyond Boulton and Murdock, to the Baldwin and Price Street area in particular.⁸⁵ Poverty was acute.⁸⁶ In reflecting on his 1976–79 service, Hallam said: 'By 1979, it was further down the spiral; it was as simple as that'.⁸⁷ A local tenants' association chair, while acknowledging help from individual officers (and the police) mused that 'somewhere in the council something is lacking'.⁸⁸ Hallam said: 'I felt as a councillor that it was a tiny little ward and nobody took it very seriously'.⁸⁹ These perceptions can be tested in an examination of the local policy response from 1981 to government intervention in 1988.

In November 1981, the housing chairman was quoted as saying that demolition and rehousing from an 'eleven-storey' Windmill Lane block (only Boulton or Murdock Place were this height) would be prohibitively costly at £4.5m. Selective clearance of maisonettes would be considered and the prospect of block-painting and landscaping was mooted.⁹⁰ But the committee three days earlier had only approved the 'possibility of refurbishing a block

⁸² Eling, 'Interviews'.

⁸³ Nevin, 'Interviews'.

⁸⁴ 'Horror storeys—Estate riddled with problems', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 11 May 1981; 'Estate one big problem', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 16 July 1981. The first of these newspaper headlines inspired the title of this section.

⁸⁵ "'Come and live here" challenge to MP', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 10 August 1981.

⁸⁶ By 1981, 31 per cent of enumeration districts (EDs) across Soho and Victoria ward were among the 2.5 per cent most deprived in England; and 76 per cent of EDs in Soho and Victoria fell in the worst 10 per cent in the DoE index compared to 22 per cent in Sandwell: Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'BCDC and HAT', 36; Sandwell MBC, 'Smethwick Initiative'.

⁸⁷ Hallam, 'Interview'.

⁸⁸ 'Horror storeys—Estate riddled with problems', *Smethwick News Telephone*.

⁸⁹ Hallam, 'Interview'. In 1979 a boundary review combined most of the Victoria and Soho wards, as constituted in 1966, into a new Soho and Victoria ward—see map in SN 4: Defining Smethwick.

⁹⁰ 'Action on the way', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 5 November 1981.

for tenants at this estate with no children'.⁹¹ A pilot security patrol at Windmill Lane was shortly approved although not implemented until 1988, apparently due to trade union opposition.⁹²

An 'open lettings policy' was instituted in 1982, particularly aimed at Windmill Lane and Black Patch.⁹³ This had already been trialled informally, leading to an outcry.⁹⁴ Lodder and Eling said other housing offices in Sandwell and indeed Birmingham exploited this to 'signpost' certain types of applicant to Windmill Lane, notably young single males from Handsworth and Lozells.⁹⁵ But in 1981–83, Sandwell formally operated a scheme for Birmingham to nominate from its waiting list to empty flats or maisonettes at Windmill Lane and Black Patch, which it amended to include unemployed applicants.⁹⁶ The open lettings

⁹¹ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 264/81: 'Feasibility of demolition and partial demolition of multi-storey blocks of flats and maisonettes', meeting held on 2 November 1981. Unfortunately no background information is available on this decision, because it was a private session of the committee. The £4.5m per block cited in the newspaper article, which is equivalent to £13.7m in 2015 prices, must have been incorrect in some form. If this figure was given to committee, it may have been decisive in preventing earlier intervention to avoid the progressive collapse of the estate.

⁹² Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 29/82: 'Security Patrols - Windmill Lane, Smethwick', meeting held on 18 January 1982; 'Vandal patrols', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 15 April 1982. A newspaper article in 1988 referred to plans by the housing committee to recruit unemployed people as security guards for 'troubled estates' two years before, which trade unions reportedly objected to because the jobs would not be permanent: 'Estates to get security guards', *Birmingham Evening Mail*, 18 August 1988.

⁹³ This provided for a list of difficult-to-let dwellings (that is, those unsuccessfully offered for let more than four times) to be displayed at area offices for 'open lettings'. This allowed lettings to be made to those otherwise ineligible for an offer at this point; or for that property type normally; or even to those ineligible for the waiting list itself. Committee approved a leaflet to be produced identifying lettings areas where it would be possible to be 'more speedily housed': Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 4/82: 'Low Demand Dwellings', meeting of the Lettings Sub-Committee held on 4 January 1982.

⁹⁴ "'Quickie slips slap on face'", *Smethwick News Telephone*, 18 June 1981.

⁹⁵ Lodder, 'Interview'; Eling, 'Interviews'.

⁹⁶ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 56/81: 'Difficult-to-let Dwellings in the Smethwick Area', meeting of the Lettings Sub-Committee held on 11 May 1981; Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 12/82: 'Difficult-to-let Dwellings in the Smethwick Area', meeting of the Lettings Sub-Committee held on 4 January 1982; Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 86/82: 'Difficult-to-let Dwellings in the Smethwick Area', meeting of the Lettings Sub-Committee held on 18 October 1982; Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 22/83: 'Difficult-to-let Dwellings in the Smethwick Area', meeting of the Lettings Sub-Committee held on 14 February 1983.

policy was contrary to previous advice to the committee.⁹⁷ It led to discretionary household formation, often by single 18-21s, and it further destabilised the estate.⁹⁸ 'Dumping' continued apace.⁹⁹ Consequently, only 37 per cent lived at their address more than five years in 1987, compared to 65 per cent across Sandwell.¹⁰⁰

As discussed in Chapter 4, the short-lived Smethwick task force was disbanded after conflicts between the local authority and the Department of the Environment (DoE).¹⁰¹ This may be linked to a decision by Sandwell in 1984 not to approve a housing trust for Windmill Lane, with an intensive estate-based programme preferred.¹⁰² So in 1981–4, the only measures taken besides expedient lettings practices appeared to be the non-implemented pilot security patrol and the purchase of a bakery for a community centre in Messenger

⁹⁷ A 1978 report stated: 'In a situation of general housing surplus it is possible to define eligibility relatively loosely, but this requires considerable care as this can have a major effect upon increasing household formation rates and could cause the average household size in the Borough to markedly reduce. It could lead to a marked incidence of under-occupation and have adverse indirect effects on the satisfaction of demand from other groups': Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 74/78: 'Housing Strategy: Report No. 4 - Patterns of Housing Demand, Appendix 1', meeting held on 3 April 1978.

⁹⁸ Eling, 'Interviews'.

⁹⁹ Horton, 'Interview'; Cooper, 'Interviews'; Lodder, 'Interview'.

¹⁰⁰ Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Main Report', para 135. This data was drawn from Sandwell's Estate Action bid for Baldwin and Price Street. The subsequent MORI survey found that 24 per cent had lived in their current property for up to a year. This figure, unremarked on by Price Waterhouse, provided a proxy measure of annual lettings but not of terminations, which must have been higher, as evidenced by the rising vacancy rate: MORI, 'Appendix V: A survey of residents from the Whiteheath and Windmill Lane estates in Sandwell: Proposed Sandwell Housing Action Trust: Report of the study by a team led by independent consultants Price Waterhouse', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Department of the Environment, West Midlands Regional Office, 1988, 6.

¹⁰¹ Ken Spencer, Andy Taylor *et al.*, *Crisis in the Industrial Heartlands—A Study of the West Midlands* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 190.

¹⁰² The relevant decision was: 'The committee received a report from the Town Clerk and Chief Executive and the Directors of Finance and Housing on alternative proposals to improve the Windmill Lane estate, Smethwick by (a) a private, non-profit-making trust for the purchase, maintenance and management of the estate; or (b) providing a more intensive estate-based management and maintenance service and a programme of improvements. It was RESOLVED that the proposed Housing Trust be not pursued and that the officers report to the meeting of the committee on 4 March 1985 for a phased improvement of the Windmill Lane estate.' Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 292/84: 'Windmill Lane Estate', meeting held on 19 December 1984. It was not possible to obtain further information on this housing trust option and any linkage with DoE via the task force.

Road.¹⁰³ This contrasted with council activity at West Smethwick (Chapter 4). However, community safety programmes and the provision of community centres in Windmill Lane would be the defining theme of local public policy for the next thirty years.

DoE involvement in Windmill Lane continued after 1984, through advice from Priority Estates Project on estate-based management.¹⁰⁴ The demolition of Boulton and Murdock Place was agreed in April 1985 and Windmill Lane estate office opened later that year.¹⁰⁵ But in August 1985, it was reported that c.200 properties were void at Windmill Lane 'as a result of vandalism', with 1,200 units requiring £6.4m expenditure.¹⁰⁶ A similar profile was reported a year later, but with Boulton and Murdock Place now described as a 'desolate eyesore on the landscape' (Figure 5.9).¹⁰⁷ An 'estate-wide strategy' required by DoE to fund measures through its Estate Action programme was produced in 1987.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ 'Tenants in talks on community project', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 29 April 1982; 'Smethwick to get cash for urban projects', *News Telephone*, 18 August 1983.

¹⁰⁴ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 177/82: 'Priority Estates Project 1982', meeting held on 12 July 1982; Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 20. This reflected the prevailing wisdom held by DoE of the benefit of intensive management: Clapham, 'Housing Management Research', 765; Hall, 'Peripheral Housing Estates', 879.

¹⁰⁵ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 77/85: 'Windmill Lane Estate', meeting held on 15 April 1985. The combined clearance cost was estimated to be £330,000 in contrast to £4.5m per block identified in 1981.

¹⁰⁶ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 153/85: 'Housing Investment Programme, Appendix: Housing Strategy 1986-87', meeting held on 14 August 1985.

¹⁰⁷ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 150/86: 'Housing Investment Programme 1987-88, Appendix 1: Housing Strategy 1987-88', meeting held on 16 July 1986.

¹⁰⁸ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 21. This strategy was approved in March 1987: Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 50/87: 'Windmill Lane Priority Estates Project', meeting held on 2 March 1987.

Figure 5.9: Boulton Place, 1987



Source: 'Boulton Place', from captioned picture, *Express & Star*, February 1987. © MNA Media. Reproduced with permission of Express & Star: Trish Penny, 16 June 2016. This is a near-identical view to the c.1959 picture at Figure 5.9.

The council embarked on a package of clearance, refurbishment and environmental works at Baldwin and Price Street. This used Estate Action and related resources and reflected local consultation.¹⁰⁹ The 'white elephant' multi-storey car park in Windmill Lane was demolished in 1987. This followed abortive efforts to pass it to housing associations since 1975.¹¹⁰ The council wasted another eighteen months trying to sell Boulton and Murdock Place, culminating in a plan for a building society to demolish one and refurbish

¹⁰⁹ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'BCDC and HAT', 102. The scheme drew on the council's main housing capital allocation and the Inner Area programme (IAP) funded through the government's Urban Programme (Chapter 4).

¹¹⁰ See Special Note 37: Disposal of multi-storey Car Parks, Windmill Lane and Black Patch.

the other.¹¹¹ The blocks were finally handed to a developer and demolished in 1988.¹¹² The Cape Hill side was not targeted in 1985–88, despite the problems at Aitken and Hamilton House and the decline of the townhouses (Figure 5.10).¹¹³ These last efforts set the scene for a DoE-imposed solution after 15 years of failure by Sandwell as parts of Windmill Lane disintegrated.

To conclude this section, Windmill Lane’s piecemeal development over twenty years included nationally-discredited system-built designs: ‘no-fines’ tower blocks, deck access flats, and Radburn-inspired townhouses. Neglect of basic safety; damaging allocation practices, including ‘dumping’; resistance to resident involvement; and the omission of community facilities characterised the local public landlordism. Yet the physical and social breakdown evident by 1981, while extreme, occurred in estates in other UK cities (Chapter 2). Windmill Lane is more notable for the local authority inaction in the earlier 1980s, until prodded by local DoE.

¹¹¹ 'Luxury home bid in tower block plan', *News Telephone*, 10 July 1986.

¹¹² Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 80/88: Boulton Place and Murdock Place, Smethwick', meeting held on 17 March 1988; Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 22; 'Vandal-hit flats set to bite dust', *News Telephone*, 12 May 1988. Also see Special Note 45: 'Suppressed historical alternatives' affecting Smethwick.

¹¹³ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'BCDC and HAT', 108. This met with criticism from the chair of the Cape Hill Tenants' Association: 'Take over estate say "forgotten" council tenants', *Birmingham Evening Mail*, 11 August 1988. Also see previous criticism: "'Black Hole" tenants desert group', *News Telephone*, 9 January 1986.

Figure 5.10: Grove Lane Townhouses, c.1988



Source: Brendan Nevin, 'Grove Lane Townhouses', from Sandwell MBC: Housing Department, *Estate Action Programme*, c.1988. © Sandwell MBC. Reproduced with permission of Brendan Nevin, 14 February 2016. Back of Concorde Way and Nash Walk, with the Crofts tower blocks in the background.

5.2 Housing Action Trust Designation and the Local Response, 1988–95

The nationally-designated HAT in July 1988 was a further exogenous shock to the local authority, after the previous imposition of the Black Country Development Corporation (Chapter 4). In Windmill Lane, it represented a ‘crisis of crisis management’, which ushered in a phase of intense council intervention.¹¹⁴ This pivotal period was contemporaneously examined by Nevin *et al*, but can now be appraised within a longer historical perspective.¹¹⁵ What appeared at the time to represent a disjuncture can be seen, in Windmill Lane itself, as exhibiting wider path-dependent relations shaping the management of decline and community engagement. This section therefore selectively covers the HAT conflict with DoE and the agreed central-local solution up to 1995.

The HAT announcement immediately led to the suspension by DoE of Estate Action and Inner Area Programme (IAP) funding.¹¹⁶ By then Sandwell had reportedly spent £3m at Baldwin and Price Street.¹¹⁷ The original HAT designation covered only part of the estate, to the west of Windmill Lane itself. This was extended to cover a ‘natural entity’ and ensure HAT viability by including Cape Hill: the council-built areas to the east and some private housing (Figure 5.11).¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ The phrase is from Martin Jones and Kevin Ward, ‘Excavating the Logic of British Urban Policy: Neoliberalism as the “crisis of crisis-management”’, *Antipode*, 34/3 (2002), 473–94; 480.

¹¹⁵ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, ‘BCDC and HAT’; Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, ‘Estate Action Evaluation’.

¹¹⁶ Inner Area Programme was regeneration funding through the national Urban Programme (Chapter 4).

¹¹⁷ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, ‘BCDC and HAT’, 106. The housing committee reportedly passed a motion congratulating the council on the progress made in halting the decline of the Windmill Lane estate: ‘£388m loss hits work on homes’, *Express & Star*, 15 August 1988.

¹¹⁸ Price Waterhouse, ‘Sandwell HAT—Main Report’, para 3, 48, 52. These are the separate ‘Windmill Lane’ and ‘Cape Hill’ HAT areas in the contemporary discussions, although both are within the overall ‘Windmill Lane’ understanding of this chapter. The extension reflected a judgment, apparently based on local stakeholder advice, that a HAT needed a minimum of 2,000 dwellings to be viable as a delivery vehicle with sufficient ‘critical mass’ to create the necessary momentum: Price Waterhouse, ‘Sandwell HAT—Main Report’, para 52–54.

At this point, 46.5 per cent of properties in the western part lay vacant, with some readied for clearance due to zero demand.¹¹⁹ Sandwell was actively trying to let 640 vacant properties across western Windmill Lane and Cape Hill, a rate of 26.6 per cent.¹²⁰ ‘Giro-drops’ were prevalent, so the effective void rate was higher still.¹²¹ Neighbourhood satisfaction in these circumstances was low: 46 per cent in western Windmill Lane and 50 per cent in Cape Hill. This compared to 73 per cent in Lion Farm (the other HAT area) and 82 per cent in Sandwell.¹²² DoE surveys found considerable dissatisfaction with homes, particularly heating, insulation and damp.¹²³ There was significant concern with estate security and cleanliness.¹²⁴ But across the area there was a strong underlying commitment to the (Labour-controlled) local authority.¹²⁵ This was the ‘loyalty’ response identified by Hirschman (see previous section) although Young regarded it as a ‘better-the-devil-you-know’ outlook.¹²⁶ The days of Conservative councillors in Soho and Victoria were well past, although electoral turnout continued to fall, an outcome elsewhere linked to neighbourhood pessimism (Figure 5.12 and Figure 5.13).¹²⁷

¹¹⁹ Some 824 units vacant from a reported stock of 1,773 in the original HAT area: PROBE, ‘Windmill Lane and Lion Farm’, 44.

¹²⁰ Price Waterhouse, ‘Sandwell HAT—Cape Hill Study’, para 71.

¹²¹ Young, ‘Interviews’. ‘Giro-drops’ or ‘phantom tenancies’ are where the registered tenant lives at a different address but uses the property as a base for claiming certain benefits.

¹²² Price Waterhouse, ‘Sandwell HAT—Cape Hill Study’, para 25. Sandwell figure from 1989 MORI poll undertaken by Sandwell MBC: Chris Wright, ‘Sandwell property and neighbourhood satisfaction back then’, [personal communication to author], 29 July 2015. Also Special Note 41: Windmill Lane and the HAT—community perspectives.

¹²³ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, ‘Estate Action Evaluation’, 34. Also see Special Note 40: Windmill Lane HAT—competing central-local investment perspectives.

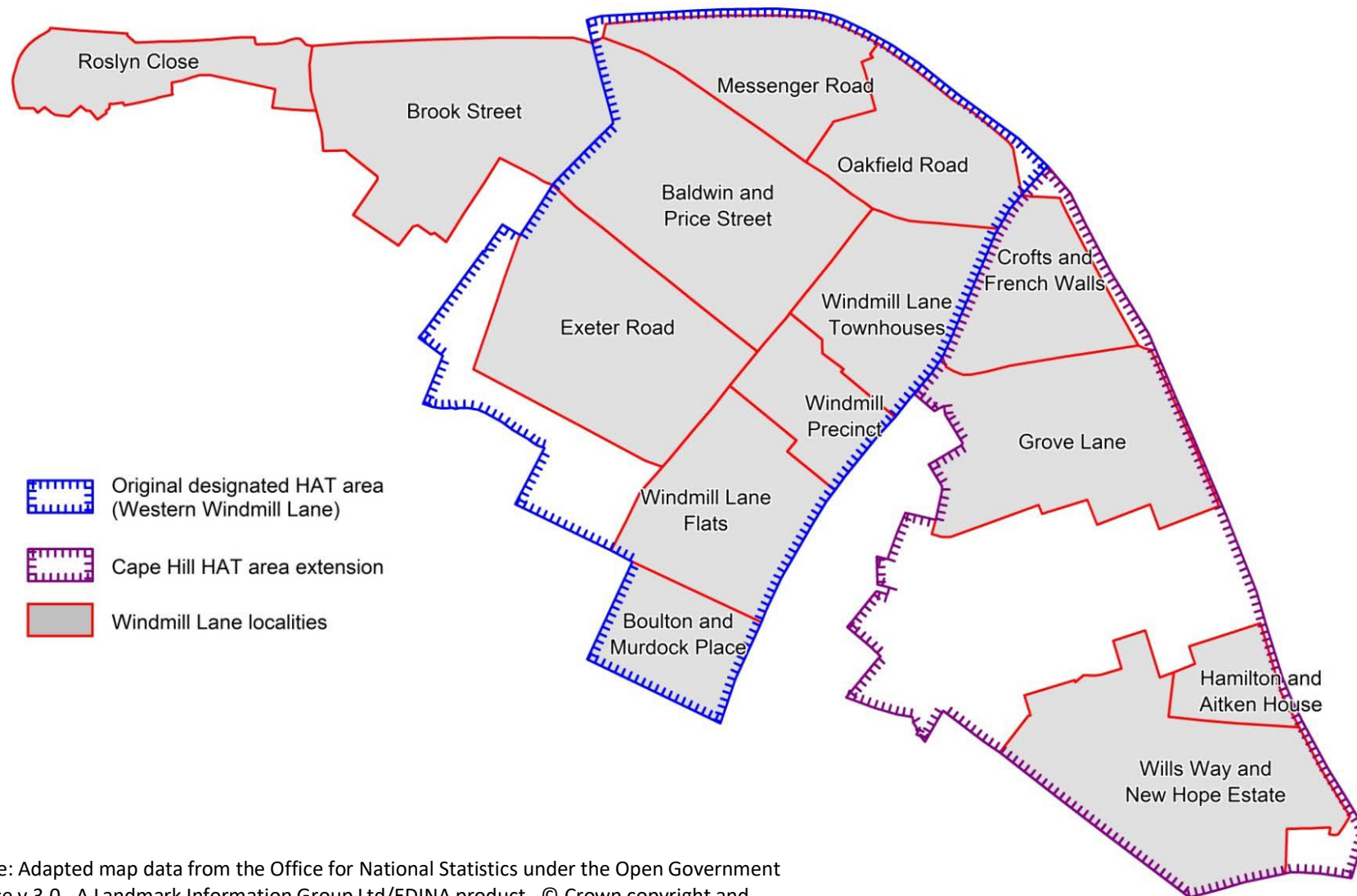
¹²⁴ Price Waterhouse, ‘Sandwell HAT—Main Report’, para 112-113. Also SN 40: Windmill Lane Investment.

¹²⁵ Price Waterhouse, ‘Sandwell HAT—Main Report’, para 108-109; PROBE, ‘Windmill Lane and Lion Farm’, 37-38; MORI, ‘Sandwell HAT—MORI Survey’, 31-32. Also SN 40: Windmill Lane Investment.

¹²⁶ Young, ‘Interviews’.

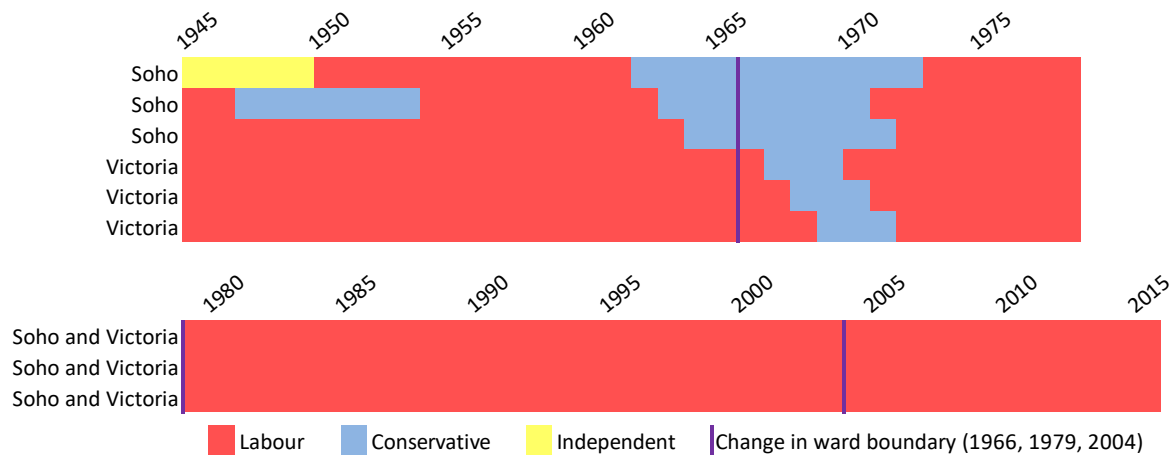
¹²⁷ Kearns and Parkinson, ‘Significance of Neighbourhood’, 2108.

Figure 5.11: Designated Windmill Lane Housing Action Trust area, 1988–90



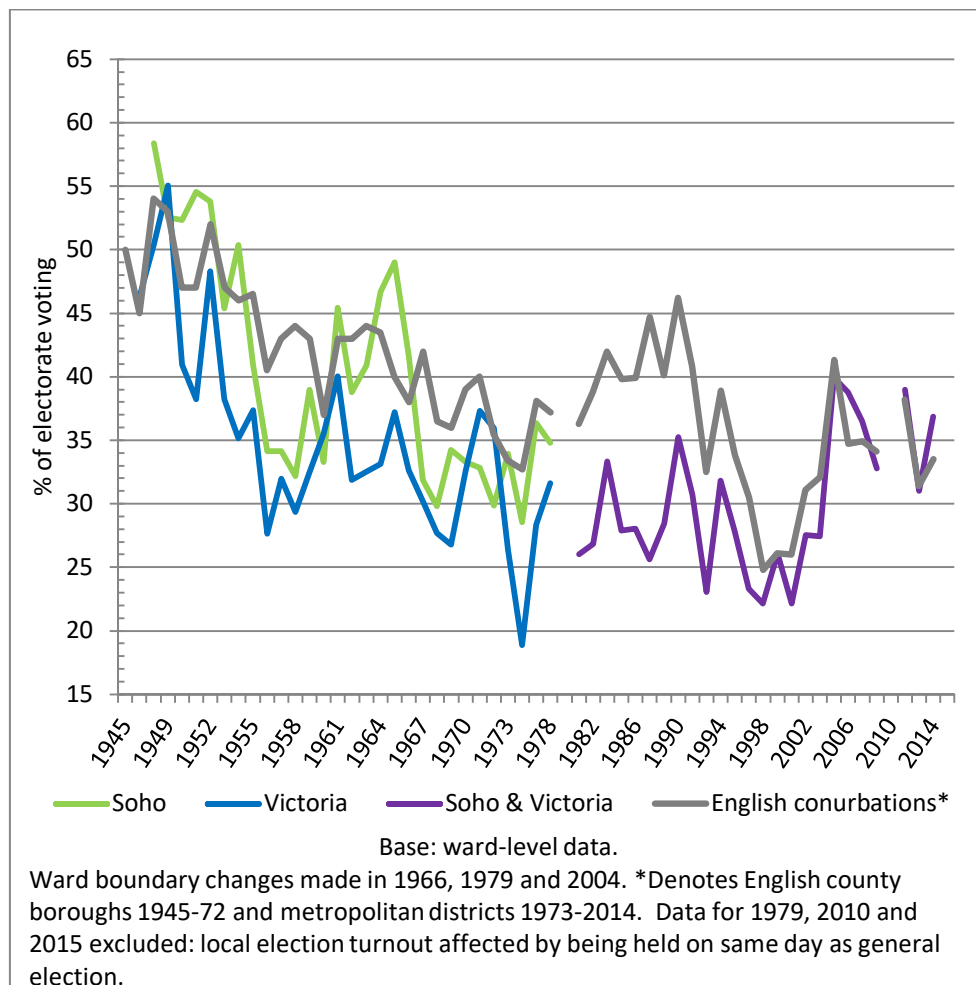
Source: Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A Landmark Information Group Ltd/EDINA product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

Figure 5.12: Political Representation in Soho and Victoria, 1945 to 2015



Source: Special Note 19: Electoral Politics in Smethwick and Sandwell. Each ward represented by three councillors.

Figure 5.13: Turnout in Local Elections in Soho and Victoria, 1945 to 2014



Source: Special Note 19: Electoral Politics in Smethwick and Sandwell.

The consultants advising DoE, Price Waterhouse, proposed to clear 420 units beyond the council's own 410 disposals; build 328 family homes for sale and rent; and retain and upgrade 887 units in western Windmill Lane.¹²⁸ A total investment cost of £39.3m across the HAT area was identified.¹²⁹ The council's own highly-flawed study identified a £1.6–£8.4m funding requirement in western Windmill Lane.¹³⁰ Either way, the entire housing capital budget for Sandwell in 1988/89 was only £18.8m.¹³¹ The council meanwhile sought to get activity underway to demonstrate its capacity to address the problems of the estate.¹³² This was hampered when visiting DoE officials were treated to the spectacle of the exterior of Charles Spragg House being painted six weeks before demolition.¹³³ Wilkinson recalled: 'It was hilarious. But that was an example of strategy where management and maintenance was dominant' (Chapter 4).¹³⁴

¹²⁸ DEGW, 'Sandwell HAT—Physical Changes', 34. In the Cape Hill side, Price Waterhouse anticipated selective demolition of medium and high-rise blocks and new-build at the Crofts and French Walls, but no data quantifying proposed levels of clearance has survived. Also see SN 40: Windmill Lane Investment.

¹²⁹ This comprised £22.9m at Windmill Lane and £16.4m at Cape Hill on local authority housing: Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Cape Hill Study', para 159.

¹³⁰ PROBE, 'Windmill Lane and Lion Farm', 55-7.

¹³¹ Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Cape Hill Study', para 62.

¹³² 'Council set to make government take notice', *News Telephone*, 15 September 1988. Late in 1988, forty detached private houses were built on the freshly-cleared tower block sites and bungalows on Price Street, close to new special needs housing with Jephson housing association: Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Cape Hill Study', para 55-57.

¹³³ 'It came to light on a bus trip organised by the Director of Housing to show visiting senior DoE officials that we didn't need a HAT and were in control of the situation. As they approached the two tower blocks he boasted how they were shortly to be demolished to make way for a new-build development. The bus turned the corner and there were the lads in a bucket on the side of the building painting it, oblivious to the fact that there were 110 long-term voids in the sky': Nevin, 'Interviews'. Others interviewed similarly recall this incident: Lodder, 'Interview'; Wilkinson, 'Interview'; Eling, 'Interviews'.

¹³⁴ Wilkinson, 'Interview'. Such works were normally approved by committee as contract awards and the following decision was identified: Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 200/88: 'Repair and overcoating of three blocks of flats, Beechway, Smethwick', meeting held on 4 July 1988. It is not clear if this minute related to retained blocks rather than Charles Spragg and George Ryder, but given the uncertainty, by then, of the whole Baldwin and Price Street estate, any external painting seems surprising.

The government eventually conceded a provision in the legislation for a ballot of tenants prior to transfer to a HAT.¹³⁵ Its reluctance seemed related to concerns about tenants making the ‘wrong’ choice. But the Environment Secretary’s anti-democratic argument that since tenants would be ‘misinformed by Labour-controlled councils’ there would be ‘no chance of balanced and informed opinion among tenants’ was duly played-out in Windmill Lane (Chapter 4).¹³⁶ Early in 1989, new consultants advising Sandwell identified the ‘flagship’ Estate Action option to enable DoE to ‘get off the HAT hook’.¹³⁷ Such flagships were a refinement of DoE’s existing programme to enable larger projects, with a local economic development dimension.¹³⁸ Following a local consultation exercise, Sandwell submitted a new Estate Action bid in February 1990. This was accepted by DoE, with the HAT abandoned in May. DoE cited the council’s ‘substantial progress’ securing private investment to address the problems of the estates.¹³⁹

Nevin subsequently believed a ‘compromise solution for a Windmill Lane HAT could have been secured, but it was three years too early’.¹⁴⁰ The arrival of Michael Heseltine at DoE in November 1990 is thus seen as critical. But as Tiesdell showed, Hull privately opened negotiations in January 1990, having secured assurances on right of tenant return to the council, tenant representation on the HAT board, and for the council leading pre-ballot

¹³⁵ In July 1988, the government was defeated in the House of Lords on an amendment to the Housing Bill requiring a ballot.

¹³⁶ Nicholas Ridley, speaking in Parliament, quoted in Steven Tiesdell, ‘A Forgotten Policy? A Perspective on the Evolution and Transformation of Housing Action Trust Policy 1987–99’, *International Journal of Housing Policy*, 1/3 (2001), 357–83, 366–67.

¹³⁷ Sandwell MBC, ‘Housing Committee Minutes’, Minute 205/89: ‘The Future of Windmill Lane and Cape Hill: the Final Report of Rainsford and Morris Consultants’, meeting held on 6 November 1989. The consultants argued: ‘If the DoE accept as they will soon have to, that they have no realistic prospect of securing a HAT in favour of the HAT, then the Estate Action option might be seen as a ‘face-saving’ formula to get off the HAT hook’: cited in Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, ‘Estate Action Evaluation’, 24.

¹³⁸ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, ‘Estate Action Evaluation’, 27.

¹³⁹ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, ‘Estate Action Evaluation’, 24.

¹⁴⁰ Nevin, ‘Interviews’.

consultations (although tenants were excluded until the public announcement in November).¹⁴¹ Tenants played a central role in Waltham Forest's negotiations from November 1989 to July 1991, with the council acting as 'neutral broker'.¹⁴² These and four other negotiated HATs were sustained until the end of their lives under a Labour government, as significant 'neighbourhood regeneration mechanisms', having received over £1bn funding.¹⁴³ Whether Sandwell should have pursued a reformulated HAT rather than Estate Action is another 'supressed historical alternative'.¹⁴⁴

The aftermath was positive in community engagement terms. The bid indicated that 'the role of the council will be to assist the local community in shaping the future of the area'.¹⁴⁵ Local tenants' associations selected a community architect to work them.¹⁴⁶ A community planning weekend attracted 130 residents to a workshop aimed at the townhouses.¹⁴⁷ This ushered in resident involvement at every stage of their redesign and internal refurbishment.¹⁴⁸ Their 'Radburn' entrance layout was reversed to create private gardens and front-parking and new pitched roofs enhanced their appearance.¹⁴⁹ The 426 townhouses eventually absorbed 46 per cent of local housing spending in 1986–93.¹⁵⁰ Nevin *et al* noted how government funding deadlines hampered consultation and resources for tenant capacity-building were limited.¹⁵¹ Reid felt the council consequently over-relied

¹⁴¹ Tiesdell, 'Forgotten Policy', 368.

¹⁴² Tiesdell, 'Forgotten Policy', 369.

¹⁴³ Tiesdell, 'Forgotten Policy', 357, 376.

¹⁴⁴ See SN 45: Historical Alternatives.

¹⁴⁵ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'BCDC and HAT', 118.

¹⁴⁶ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'BCDC and HAT', 117.

¹⁴⁷ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'BCDC and HAT', 122.

¹⁴⁸ 'Tenants' involvement ensures pride returns', *Birmingham Post*, 18 June 1992.

¹⁴⁹ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 36–37.

¹⁵⁰ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 48.

¹⁵¹ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'BCDC and HAT', 120.

on a small group of active residents.¹⁵² However, Pinto demonstrated this was a common problem of Estate Action initiatives.¹⁵³ The subsequent reputation of the scheme's community engagement was unfortunately marred by the 'Tuscan' style repainting of Windmill Precinct and its public art centrepiece.¹⁵⁴

Estate Action was intended to reduce housing density, diversify tenure, address heating problems and improve estate management. An evaluation found it achieved most of its objectives, gaining credibility for Sandwell with DoE.¹⁵⁵ Some 1,317 dwellings were improved, mainly through heating and insulation packages, new kitchens and windows, and front doors.¹⁵⁶ Clearance reached 896 units or 31.2 per cent of the original estates.¹⁵⁷ Thus three further tower blocks were demolished in the immediate post-HAT period. Twelve 4-5 storey blocks at Baldwin and Price Street were demolished, but nine were refurbished and three converted to houses.¹⁵⁸ A further £9.5m of housing association and private investment added 283 new homes (Figure 5.14 and Figure 5.15).¹⁵⁹ There was a sharp fall in vacancies from 26.6 to 2.1 per cent in 1988–92.¹⁶⁰ Rent arrears were reduced and inroads made into the repairs backlog.¹⁶¹

¹⁵² Reid, 'Interview'.

¹⁵³ Ricardo R. Pinto, 'The Impact of Estate Action on Developments in Council Housing, Management and Effectiveness', unpublished PhD thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science, 1991, 148-51.

¹⁵⁴ Eling, 'Interviews'. See Special Note 42: Public Art in Windmill Precinct, 1964 and 1993.

¹⁵⁵ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 92.

¹⁵⁶ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 36-38, 43.

¹⁵⁷ Author's calculation based on Sandwell MBC planning data.

¹⁵⁸ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'BCDC and HAT', 102.

¹⁵⁹ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 39.

¹⁶⁰ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 52.

¹⁶¹ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 57.

DoE allocations ultimately totalled £14.5m and with IAP and Sandwell's own capital programme, spending at Windmill Lane was £20.5m in 1986–94.¹⁶² The evaluation found Estate Action funding was nonetheless insufficient, with a further £12m investment needed.¹⁶³ Stock turnover remained high at 18.4 per cent in 1991/92 compared to 8.1 per cent for Sandwell.¹⁶⁴ Increasing homeless allocations (to 24.1 per cent of annual lettings) were seen as concentrating disadvantage and contributing to estate instability.¹⁶⁵ In one view, 'For us as social workers, the effect is frustrating and exhausting. No matter how hard we work at protecting children, there seems to be no end to the influx of new families with additional problems'.¹⁶⁶ Despite environmental improvements, neighbourhood satisfaction remained low, at 53.5 per cent.¹⁶⁷ The evaluation found local economic development activity was uncoordinated, with limited impact.¹⁶⁸ It argued a corporate response was also needed to link various capital and revenue activities.¹⁶⁹ Poverty meanwhile remained widespread and severe, with additional financial exclusion due to area stigma.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶² Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 42. A national evaluation found Estate Action schemes were more successful when combined with Urban Programme (IAP): Brian Robson, Michael Bradford *et al.*, *Assessing the Impact of Urban Policy* (Inner Cities Research Programme, Department of the Environment; London: HMSO, 1994), 53.

¹⁶³ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 90.

¹⁶⁴ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 53.

¹⁶⁵ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 53. Social services and a local school called on the housing department to change housing allocations policy and practice: Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 70–71.

¹⁶⁶ Cited in Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 70. Soho and Victoria ward accounted for 2.8 per cent of Sandwell's population in 1991, but 20 per cent of child abuse referrals in three years: Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 70.

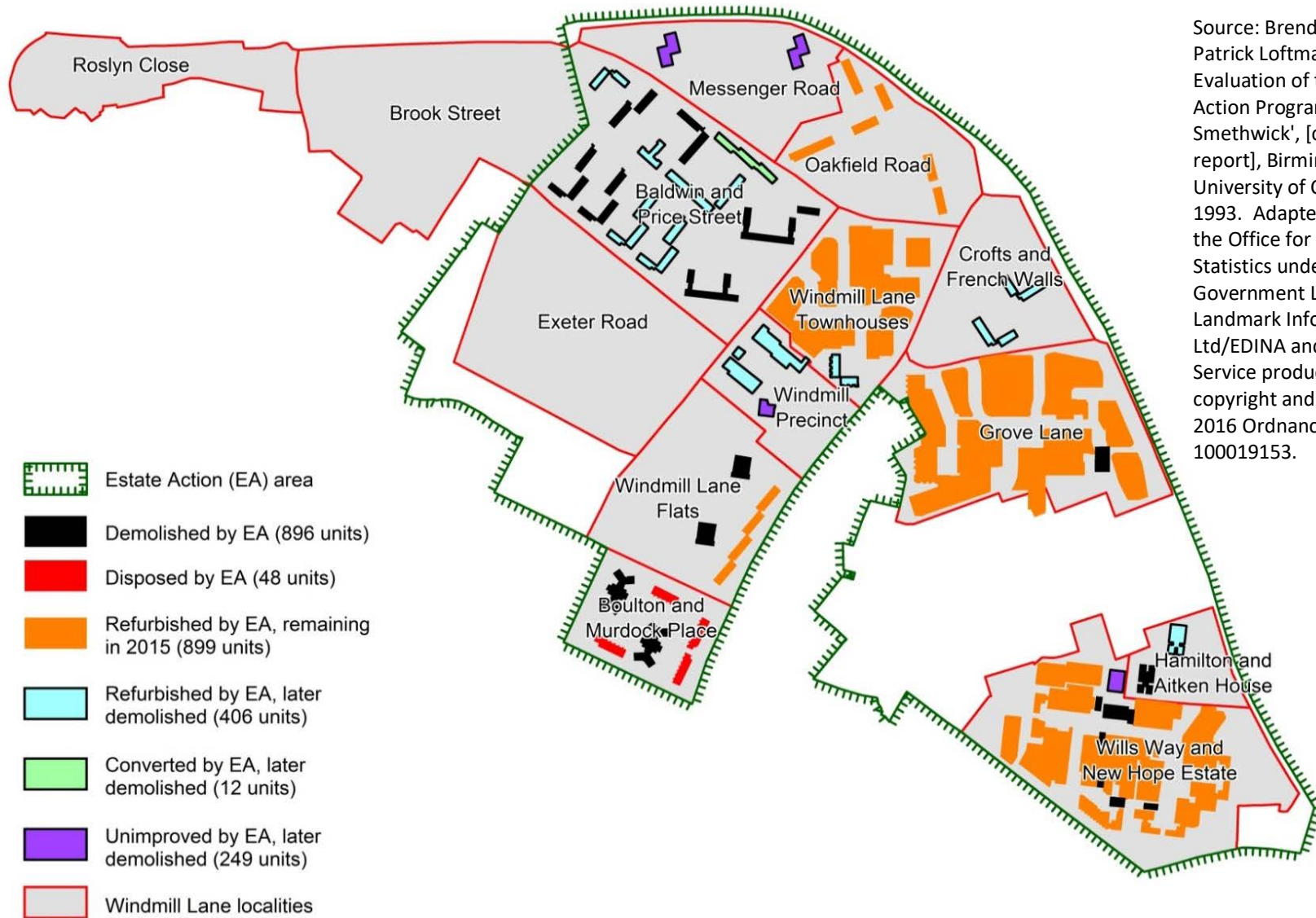
¹⁶⁷ UCE Survey 1991, Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', Table 16.

¹⁶⁸ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 83.

¹⁶⁹ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 90.

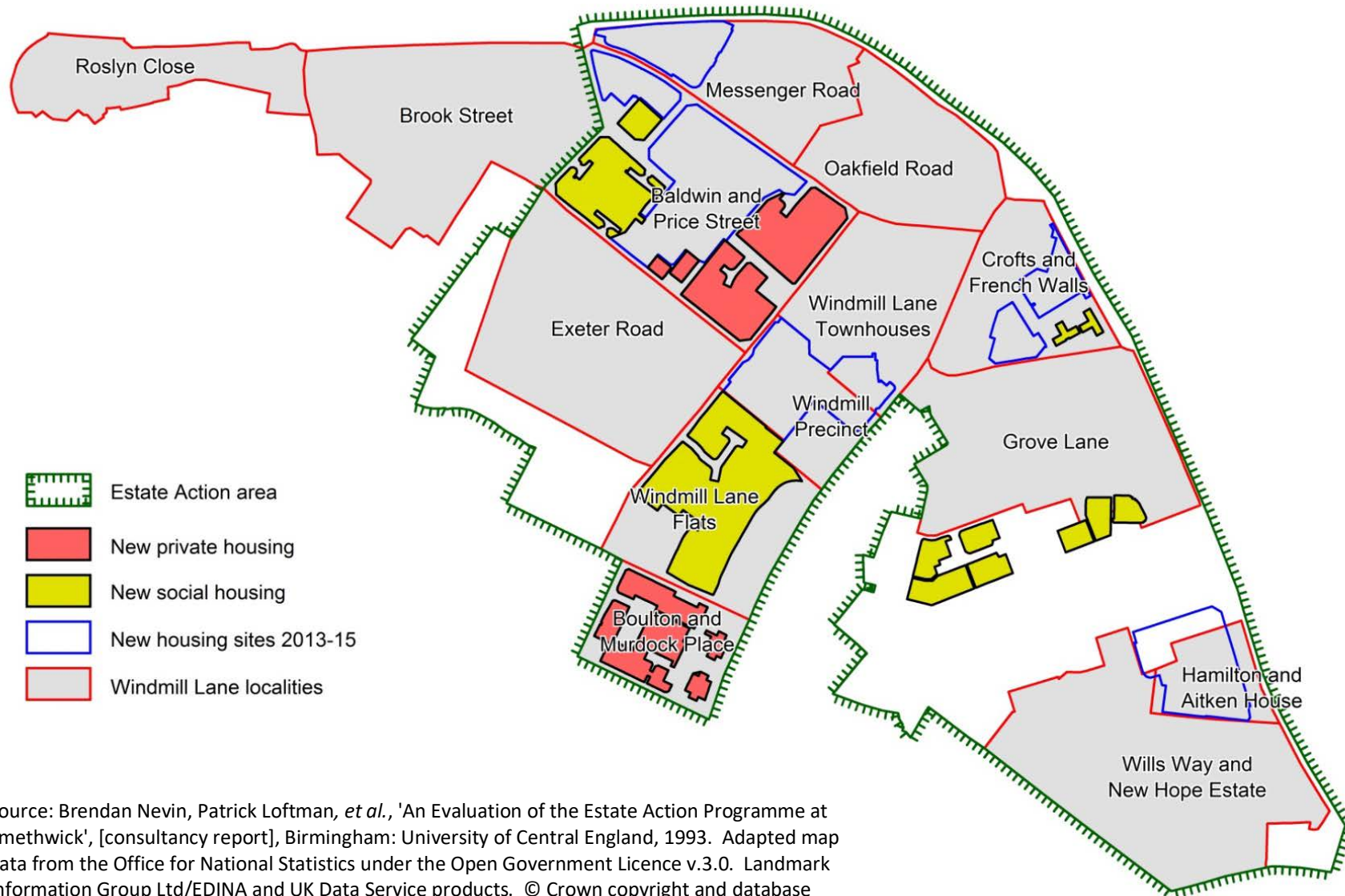
¹⁷⁰ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 89 and 91. Financial exclusion is the inability of individuals, households or groups to access financial services in an appropriate form. These can include access to transaction services, credit, insurance, or savings services. It is either a cause or consequence of social exclusion or both.

Figure 5.14: Estate Action and aftermath in Windmill Lane 1988 to 2008



Source: Brendan Nevin, Patrick Loftman, *et al.*, 'An Evaluation of the Estate Action Programme at Smethwick', [consultancy report], Birmingham: University of Central England, 1993. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. Landmark Information Group Ltd/EDINA and UK Data Service products. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

Figure 5.15: New housing in Windmill Lane, 1988 to 2015



Source: Brendan Nevin, Patrick Loftman, *et al.*, 'An Evaluation of the Estate Action Programme at Smethwick', [consultancy report], Birmingham: University of Central England, 1993. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. Landmark Information Group Ltd/EDINA and UK Data Service products. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

To conclude this section, 1988–95 saw a characteristic and successful political reaction to a high-point of central government direction. Windmill Lane had passed through crisis, receiving necessary but not sufficient investment. Would it continue to hold Sandwell’s policy attention, or was it seen as ‘job done’? The evaluation of Estate Action judged that Windmill Lane ‘will continue to be subject to intense social pressures and remain difficult-to-manage for the foreseeable future’, requiring continued investment.¹⁷¹ It suggested Windmill Lane could receive another Estate Action scheme, but recognised there were other pressing areas in Sandwell. Another identified option was an area-based regeneration initiative (ABI).¹⁷² Incremental funding from the council’s diminished capital programme was thought unlikely. Alternatively, the local authority could rely on intensive housing management to contain social problems and stock decline in the short-term.¹⁷³

5.3 ‘Masterplanned to death’: Windmill Lane since Estate Action, 1995 to 2015

Windmill Lane was a strategic catalyst, heralding major housing market restructuring and dozens of ABIs across Sandwell.¹⁷⁴ Yet the longer-term legacy of the HAT episode and its Estate Action aftermath appears, for Windmill Lane itself, to be overlooked. Press coverage was less, its treatment in council and consultancy documents elliptical. This section completes a sixty-year review, arguing this omission is symptomatic of a persistent approach to both the management of decline and community engagement.

¹⁷¹ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 59.

¹⁷² The evaluation mentioned City Challenge, but the third round was subsequently cancelled by the government: Fred Robinson and Keith Shaw, 'Urban Policy under the Conservatives—In Search of the Big Idea?', *Local Economy*, 9/3 (1994), 224–35, 225.

¹⁷³ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 91–94.

¹⁷⁴ Kintrea identified the significance of national Estate Action programme as reshaping the central-local government relationship through funding bidding; the identification of non-housing issues and hence the limitations of ‘housing-led regeneration’; and the acceptance of tenure choice and securing social mix: Keith Kintrea, 'Policies and Programmes for Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods: Recent English experience', *Housing Studies*, 22/2 (2007), 261–82, 271.

Retrospective criticism of Estate Action among those interviewed was widespread to the point of it being a 'lightning rod' for perceived long-term place management failings.¹⁷⁵ Lucas argued the national Estate Action programme encouraged refurbishment of obsolete stock.¹⁷⁶ Eling noted that renewed stock was shortly cleared; he also felt community engagement was inadequate.¹⁷⁷ Young contended it failed to build community capacity.¹⁷⁸ For Cooper, it failed to address economic issues.¹⁷⁹ In revisiting his past evaluation, Nevin argued it was successful in its own terms.¹⁸⁰ But in the absence of a Smethwick overview, Estate Action and the adjacent private housing scheme were conducted separately.¹⁸¹

Moreover:

The physical restructuring in the two schemes wasn't backed up by people-based skills training and were just seen as housing schemes. And when the money ran out there wasn't a local authority capital commitment to ensure the process continued, along with the later SRB4 projects around people. So it left large gaps in the urban form which gave an impression the place wasn't looked after and was in decline.¹⁸²

Windmill Lane was included in the Urban Programme area, SRB4 scheme, Urban Living pathfinder area and mainly district-wide European and nationally-funded regeneration programmes and schemes (Chapter 4). In immediate physical proximity, it gained the Cape Hill and Windmill Lane Children's Centre (which housed SureStart); the Victoria Park Skill Centre; the Victoria Women's Centre; and the Ron Davis Centre for Family Education and Training. SRB4 funded the Smethwick Pakistani Muslim Association's nearby

¹⁷⁵ Nevin, 'Interviews'; Young, 'Interviews'; Cooper, 'Meeting'; Eling, 'Interviews'; Lodder, 'Interview'; Wilkinson, 'Interview'; Lucas, 'Interview'; Gary Bowman, 'Interview with Author', 4 February 2014; Marianne Monro, 'Interview with Author', 21 May 2013. Bowman was a senior council officer and Windmill Lane resident. Monro was a community worker who grew-up in Windmill Lane and worked at Friends and Neighbours CIC.

¹⁷⁶ Lucas, 'Interview'.

¹⁷⁷ Eling, 'Interviews'.

¹⁷⁸ Young, 'Interviews'.

¹⁷⁹ Cooper, 'Meeting'.

¹⁸⁰ Nevin, 'Interviews'.

¹⁸¹ This refers to the Cape Hill Community Renewal Area, a scheme which consumed the bulk of Sandwell private sector housing budget in the early 1990s.

¹⁸² Nevin, 'Interviews'.

base and the large new Black-led CAP Centre.¹⁸³ An employment and training centre was opened at Hamilton House. But Windmill Lane did not gain an appropriate, integrated area-based regeneration initiative. As seen, City Challenge went to Tipton and Windmill Lane was not considered for a New Deal for Communities (NDC) scheme.¹⁸⁴

Critical to the legacy of Estate Action is the contention that Windmill Lane in the late 1990s continued to suffer from inadequate resources, including repairs and caretaking and cleaning from housing budgets. Housing managers and a ward councillor also claimed wider council neglect, including street services such as rubbish collection and grounds maintenance.¹⁸⁵ Dissatisfaction with street services was identified in four residents surveys conducted in 1988–91.¹⁸⁶ Monro observed in 1996 that ‘Estate Action improvements are already decaying’.¹⁸⁷ Wilkinson claimed ‘the attitude among street operatives was: ‘it’s just Windmill Lane, let it rot’’.¹⁸⁸ The wider literature identified how provider perceptions of dealing with ‘problem people’ in ‘problem areas’ could lead to the ‘reinforcement of low standards’ as a form of ‘territorial injustice’ (Chapter 2).

¹⁸³ The housing committee originally granted a flat in the Baldwin and Price Street area to the Community Action Project (CAP), group of black residents in 1982: Sandwell MBC, ‘Housing Committee Minutes’, Minute 2/82: ‘Community Flat - Windmill Lane’, meeting of the Lettings Sub-Committee held on 4 January 1982. CAP received MSC funding at the time. CAP opened the purpose-built centre on Windmill Lane in c.2004: CAP Centre, ‘About’, [showcase website], <<http://www.cap-centre.com/about/>>, accessed 28 July 2015. SRB4 had provided initial funding, with a commitment that the remaining amount would come from the regional development agency. This was subject to considerable delay; an example of the lack of continuity between changing initiatives: Chris Khamis, ‘Interviews with Author’, 6 November 2013, 4 February 2014 and 3 March 2016. Khamis was a fellow director of CSR Partnership with the author who particularly worked with the Smethwick Regeneration Partnership.

¹⁸⁴ Young, ‘Interviews’; Nevin, ‘Interviews’; Wilkinson, ‘Interview’.

¹⁸⁵ Lodder, ‘Interview’; Wilkinson, ‘Interview’; Cooper, ‘Meeting’.

¹⁸⁶ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, ‘Estate Action Evaluation’, 86.

¹⁸⁷ Marianne Monro, ‘Meeting with Author’, 17 June 1996.

¹⁸⁸ Wilkinson, ‘Interview’.

‘Dumping’ into Windmill Lane is held by some interviewees to have ended after the HAT episode, although Reid felt it characterised the 2000s.¹⁸⁹ Such allocations appear to be a continuous feature, which ‘helped to concentrate people with least choice. That’s what happened in parts of Windmill Lane.’¹⁹⁰ When All Saints psychiatric hospital in nearby Winson Green closed in the 1990s under ‘care in the community’, many discharged patients were rehoused in Windmill Lane.¹⁹¹ Two publicised deaths of overlooked ex-patients living in isolation in tower blocks underlined the problem.¹⁹² Some 31-46 per cent of lettings in 1998/99 were made to homeless people or through the difficult-to-let register in the two halves of the estate.¹⁹³ As seen in Chapter 4, Soho and Victoria in the 2000s absorbed 94 per cent of Sandwell’s emergency placement of asylum seekers and refugees, mainly into difficult-to-let flats. Some were ‘unaccompanied children’ placed by other local authorities on cost grounds.¹⁹⁴ Others were displaced by council clearance.¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁹ Cooper, 'Interviews'; Lodder, 'Interview'; Reid, 'Interview'.

¹⁹⁰ Anonymised officer comment.

¹⁹¹ Cooper, 'Interviews'; Hallam, 'Interview'; Birmingham Mind, 'A History of Birmingham Mind—Celebrating half a century of excellence in mental health provision', [showcase document], Birmingham: Birmingham Mind, 2012, 23. Care in the community is the policy of deinstitutionalisation, treating and caring for physically and mentally disabled people in their homes rather than in an institution, resulting from National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990.

¹⁹² Lodder, 'Interview'.

¹⁹³ ‘Least choice’ lettings accounted for 30.6 per cent in Windmill Lane (including 19.8 per cent to homeless); and 46.3 per cent in Cape Hill (23.1 per cent homeless): CSR Partnership, 'Sandwell Housing Demand Study: Appendix 1 Housing management data', [consultancy report], Birmingham CSR Partnership, 2000, Figure 22. The Sandwell Women’s Refuge was at this point in Black Patch and this also generated local homeless applications for accommodation in Windmill Lane: Sandwell MBC, 'South East District Strategy Statement', [council report], Smethwick: Sandwell MBC, Housing Department, 1993, 7.

¹⁹⁴ PricewaterhouseCoopers, 'Windmill Eye Study', 16. PwC reported that some of these were accommodated in the private rented sector. Sandwell MBC data identified 78 ‘unaccompanied asylum seeker children’ in 41 properties in Smethwick in 2007. Most would have been in Soho and Victoria ward: Sandwell MBC, 'Newcomers in Sandwell', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2007, 7.

¹⁹⁵ Cooper, 'Interviews'.

The short-lived benefit of Estate Action as an isolated intervention was seen when housing vacancies in Windmill Lane rose from two per cent in 1992 to reach 20–21 per cent by 1999.¹⁹⁶ By then it once more presented the severest low demand in Sandwell, with the Cape Hill side worse than western Windmill Lane (Chapter 4). Meanwhile, 12–29 per cent of voids arose through abandonment or eviction.¹⁹⁷ But significantly, turnover had fallen to 12 per cent.¹⁹⁸ The council response to continued area decline was to undertake piecemeal stock clearance (Figure 5.16 and Figure 5.17). The 2002 housing strategy declared the problems in Windmill Lane to be ‘unique’ as one of the least popular lettings areas due to its stigma. A significant clearance programme was ‘the inevitable consequence of this reality’.¹⁹⁹ As seen, the public narrative during the HAT episode did not mention high voids or clearance. Yet by 2007, 73 per cent of the dwellings designated as the original HAT area had been cleared.²⁰⁰ This level of estate restructuring, combined with inflow from the European Union and by asylum seekers finally transformed the demand equation, albeit with poverty ‘topped-up’.²⁰¹ Turnover fell further and the estate was readily lettable, as elsewhere in Sandwell (Chapter 4).²⁰²

¹⁹⁶ Vacancies were 20.5 percent in Windmill Lane; and 22.5 per cent in Cape Hill: CSR Partnership, 'Housing Demand Appendix 1', Table 2.

¹⁹⁷ Abandonment and evictions accounted for 12 per cent in Windmill Lane and 29.3 per cent in Cape Hill. CSR Partnership, 'Sandwell Housing Demand Study: Main Report', [consultancy report], Birmingham CSR Partnership, 2000, 64, 67.

¹⁹⁸ Turnover was 11.7 per cent in Windmill Lane and 12.5 per cent in Cape Hill in 1998/99. Neither met the low demand threshold of 15 per cent on this measure: CSR Partnership, 'Housing Demand Appendix 1', Figure 6.

¹⁹⁹ Sandwell MBC, 'Towards a Housing Strategy for Smethwick', [council report], Smethwick: Sandwell MBC, Housing Strategy and Enabling Division, 2002, para 5.12.

²⁰⁰ Author's calculation based on Sandwell MBC planning data: Patricia McCullagh, 'Planning data for Smethwick research', [personal communication to author], 2 May 2013.

²⁰¹ Inflow is the most direct indicator of estate trajectory: Norris and O'Connell, 'Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods', 375.

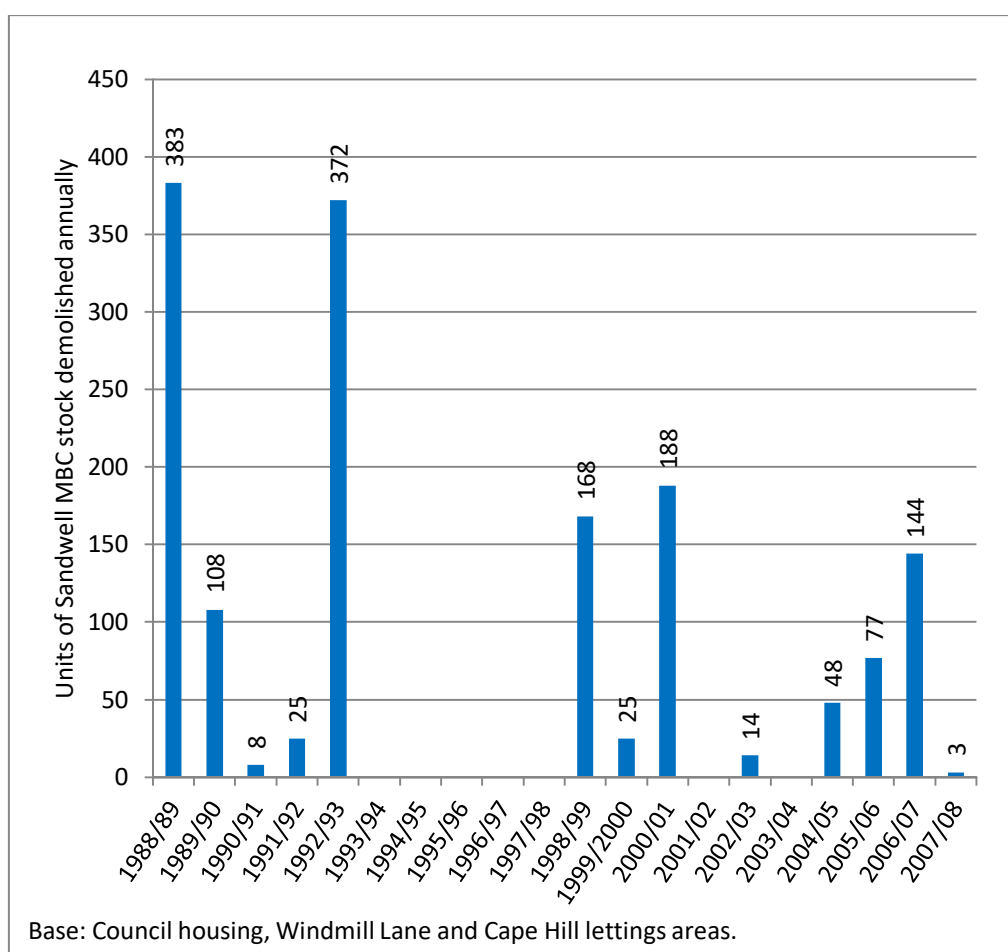
²⁰² Neville Rowe, 'Interview with Author', 16 March 2013. Rowe was a housing research officer and manager at Sandwell MBC. A survey found 67 per cent had lived in Windmill Lane more than five years in 2008 compared to just 37 per cent in 1987: Vector Research, 'Household Survey 2008: Final Report for Urban Living', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Vector Research, 2009, survey tabulations for boosted 'Windmill Eye' area sample.

Figure 5.16: Demolition of Hamilton House, 2007



Source: Adam Carey, 'Demolition of Hamilton House, Grove Lane', 2 January 2007. © Adam Carey.

Figure 5.17: Annual Demolitions, Sandwell MBC stock in Windmill Lane 1988 to 2008



Source: See Special Note 25: Scale of Housing Clearance in Smethwick.

Piecemeal clearance underlined that an overall plan was not developed for Windmill Lane during this period of change. Lodder commented: 'There never was, right from when we demolished Boulton and Murdock Place, an overview if you like'.²⁰³ Windmill Lane had been a strategic catalyst in Sandwell, but officer focus and capacity was drawn away to other pressing neighbourhoods.²⁰⁴ One manager said Windmill Lane featured in corporate officer discussions during the 2000s as a place needing a clear focus, but ownership of the issue was unclear: was it a strategic housing responsibility?²⁰⁵ This perception rests alongside Cooper's experience of 'at least three or four masterplans to improve Windmill

²⁰³ Lodder, 'Interview'.

²⁰⁴ Wilkinson, 'Interview'; Nevin, 'Interviews'.

²⁰⁵ Anonymised officer comment.

Lane and that part of Smethwick' (Figure 5.18).²⁰⁶ These plans were 'transformational change' studies for Smethwick: undertaken by different regeneration delivery vehicles or council planners during the 2000s (Chapter 4). They were not rooted in physical, financial or community realities. For example, Figure 5.19 shows how significant the early notion of locating the new 'super-hospital' within Windmill Lane would have been.²⁰⁷ Other politicians interviewed criticised being 'masterplanned to death'.²⁰⁸ John's conclusion, however, was: 'Always have a plan, even if it's only a plan to have a plan' (Figure 5.20).²⁰⁹ Yet the 2011 'Windmill Eye' masterplan was the first neighbourhood overview since the start of redevelopment in 1954.

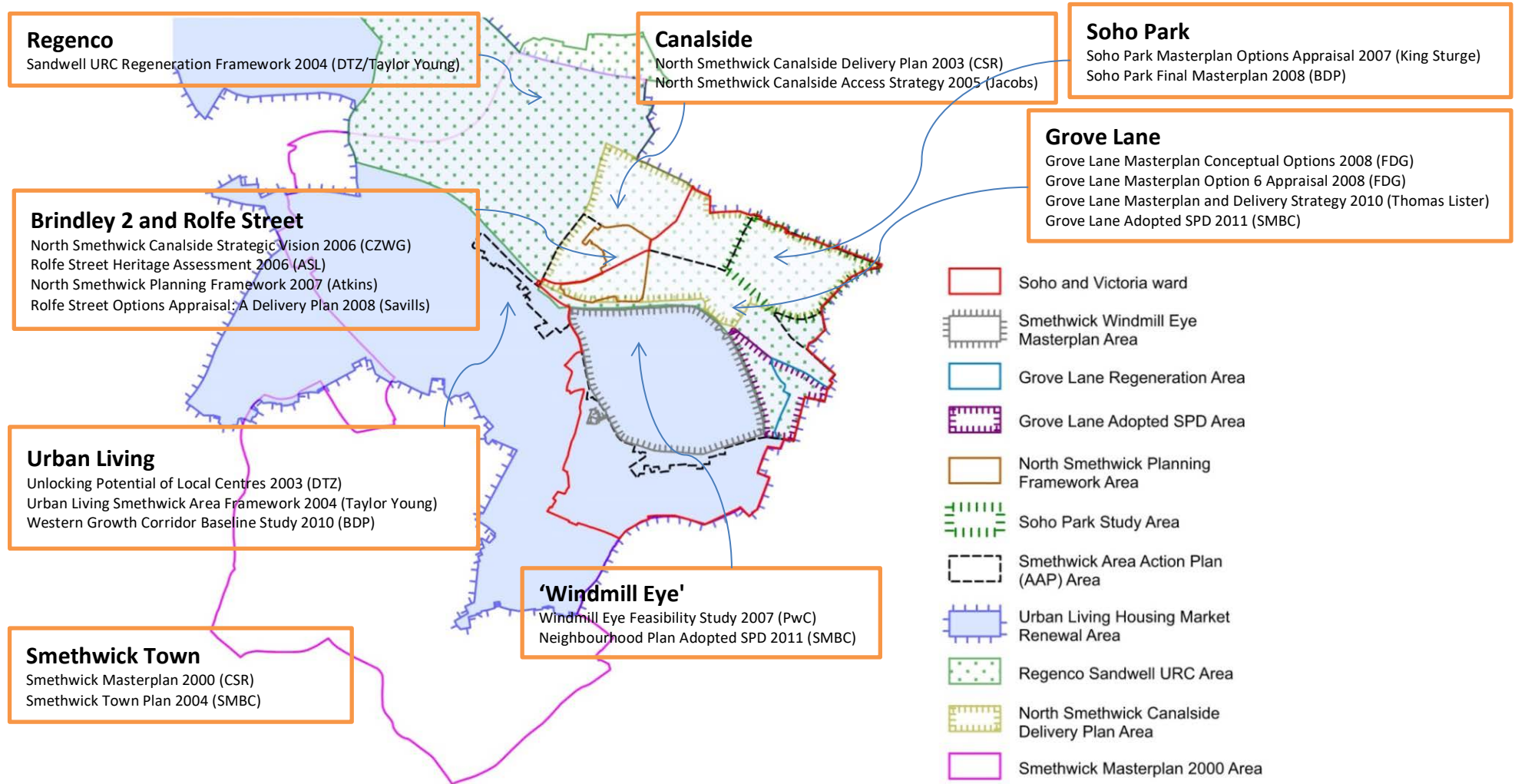
²⁰⁶ Cooper, 'Interviews'.

²⁰⁷ Also see Regenco masterplan: 'The Windmill Lane site is an ideal location for this new facility' (para 4.15). This assessment was based on the view that: 'This dense residential area is subject to change through the Housing Market Renewal Area (HMRA). It is likely that some of the eastern part of the area, nearest to the A457 gateway and Cape Hill Brewery and opposite the Grove Lane area, will be available for redevelopment' (para 4.16): Taylor Young and DTZ Peda Consulting, 'Sandwell URC Regeneration Framework—Final Report', [consultancy report], Birmingham: DTZ Debenham Tie Leung Limited, 2004, 93.

²⁰⁸: Cooper, 'Interviews'. This comment by Cooper inspired the section title. Also John Spellar, 'Meeting with Author', 27 January 2009; Eling, 'Interviews'. Spellar was MP for Warley after 1997.

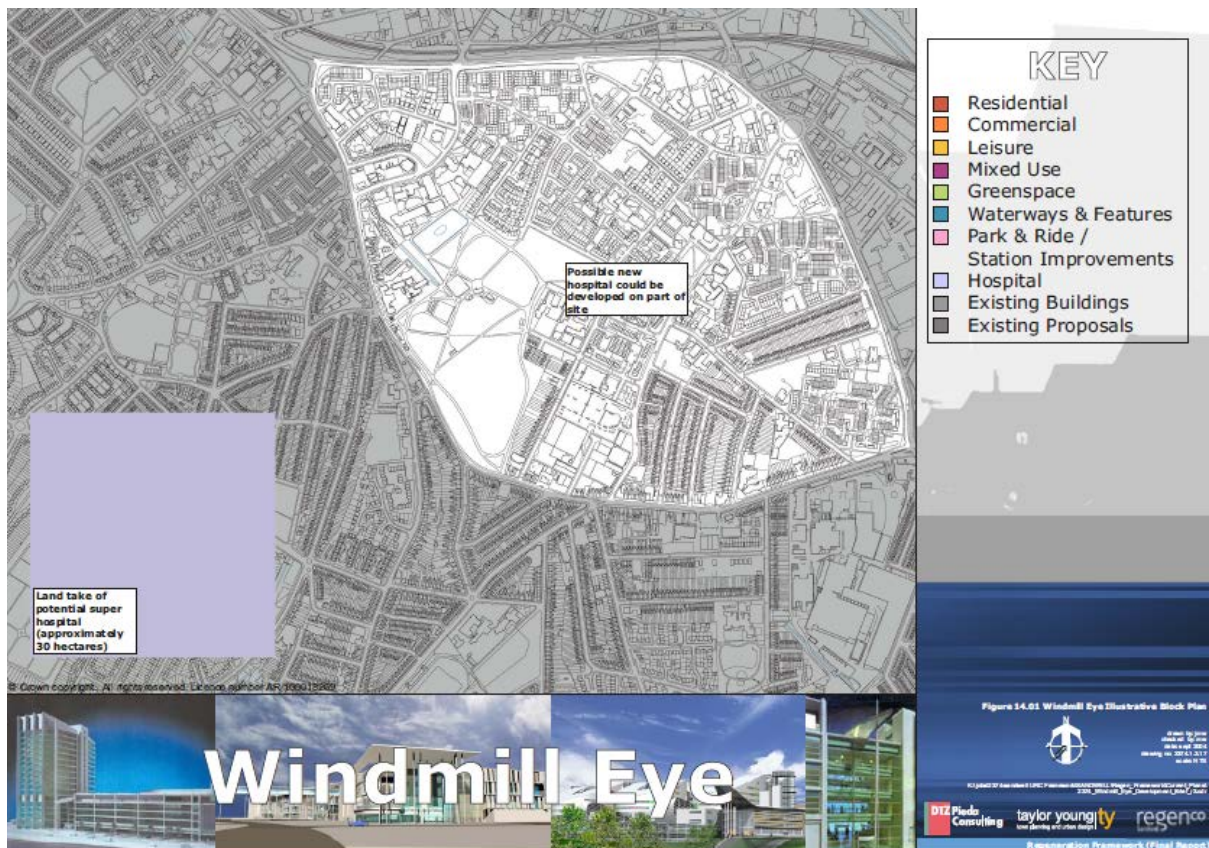
²⁰⁹ Peter John, "'Looking Forward – Regeneration in East Sandwell": Presentation by the Director of Partnerships and Housing, Sandwell MBC: Urban Living – the Legacy: Sharing Good Practice Event', [council report], 2010.

Figure 5.18: Masterplans relating to Soho and Victoria ward, 2000–10



For studies listed see bibliography. Boundaries digitised from a wide variety of reports and maps and with the kind assistance of Christine Wright, Sandwell MBC. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A UK Data Service product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

Figure 5.19: Locating a new ‘super-hospital’ in Windmill Lane: Regenco Masterplan, 2004



Source: 'Figure 14.01 Windmill Eye Illustrative Block Plan', [Diagrammatic map], from Taylor Young and DTZ Pleda Consulting, *Sandwell URC Regeneration Framework*, 2004, 96. © Sandwell MBC. Reproduced with permission of Sandwell MBC: Hayley Insley, 9 August 2016. This figure shows the proportionate size of a 30-hectare hospital site located in Windmill Lane (purple box, bottom left).

As one manager commented in 2007: ‘There’s been this “waiting and seeing”—what’s going to happen to the area? It’s the “treading water”—the future hanging over it for a long time’.²¹⁰ The impact on communities in Windmill Lane of such place management was related by Wright: ‘People were hurt and are still hurt by some of that history. When people tell their stories about life in the area, they are hurt by the neglect; and services not quite believing their experience of living in a mess’.²¹¹ This is an aspect of the dissonance recorded by Monro in relation to the existence (or otherwise) of a ‘plan’ for the area.

People saw the hand of public policy in the boarding-up of play areas; rapid clearance of

²¹⁰ Anonymised officer comment.

²¹¹ Diane Wright, 'Interview with Author', 4 February 2014. Wright was a senior council officer and Windmill Lane resident.

stock refurbished under Estate Action; and inexplicably long-vacant sites (Figure 5.21). They attempted to rationalise this as flowing from some plan for the area, whilst understanding this combination of action and inaction could not be a plan. They felt it was ‘done to the area’ and they experienced the consequences.²¹² Research by Davidson *et al* demonstrated ways quality of life in areas undergoing regeneration can be adversely affected. Voids, demolitions, vacant sites, displacement, loss of amenity, environmental quality, confusion over complexity, frustration, and fear for the future culminating in ‘regeneration fatigue’ were identified.²¹³

An expectation of further external funding is one explanation given for the long-term vacant sites.²¹⁴ But by the mid-2000s, the priority was to build on them to enable clearance of the townhouse areas, where Sandwell initially wanted to locate the new hospital. The townhouses by then had received both Estate Action and ‘Decent Homes’ investment.²¹⁵ This replacement focus reflected an emergent decanting requirement as historic capacity available through high turnover and voids disappeared in the decade. This implied a ‘build-decant-clear-build’ approach – which required another consultancy study.²¹⁶ The eventual PwC plan proposed to demolish 761 townhouses and flats and build 311 social and 495

²¹² Monro’s direct comment was: ‘Residents think: “we’re fed up people doing things to us”. Because if you look at the Chinese playground, Estate Action, the HAT; if you look at all the stuff that’s gone on, it’s no wonder people have these mixed emotions. So there was a plan, there must have been a plan, they did that stuff on Estate Action, then they put these houses on and they’ve all come down; they’ve done this and they’ve done that. So probably the articulation of it is not a plan – it’s not accurate in that sense – but what’s happened over the years is that very thing. Pockets of land left for years; if they really did care they’d have done something about it, but on the other hand they’re churning over different estates and doing different things, you can see why there is this feeling, this mixed emotion.’ Monro, ‘Interview’.

²¹³ Gill Davidson, David McGuinness *et al.*, ‘“It’ll get worse before it gets better” —Local experiences of living in a regeneration area’, *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, 7/1 (2013), 55–66; 56, 59–62.

²¹⁴ Kerry Bolister, ‘Interview with Author’, 15 October 2013. Bolister was Area Director—Homes and Communities at Sandwell after 2011.

²¹⁵ Reid, ‘Interview’. The Decent Homes Standard is a programme aimed at improving council and housing association homes to bring them all up to a minimum standard (see Chapter 4).

²¹⁶ Wilkinson, ‘Interview’. Sandwell MBC, ‘Housing Products Survey for Smethwick: Consultancy brief’, [council report], Smethwick: Sandwell MBC, Housing Strategy and Enabling Division, 2006.

private housing across Windmill Lane and adjacent areas, requiring £64m public funding.²¹⁷

Townhouse clearance as advocated by PwC was unrealistic, and land acquisition for the new hospital was pursued outside Windmill Lane (Chapter 6).

Figure 5.20: Sandwell MBC view of Good Practice in Regeneration in 2010



Source: 'Urban Living: The Legacy—Sharing Good Practice event', [PowerPoint slide], from Peter John, Looking Forward—Regeneration in East Sandwell, Presentation by the Director of Partnerships and Housing, 17 November 2010. © Sandwell MBC. Reproduced under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0. Apparent error in final point is as originally shown in the presentation.

²¹⁷ PricewaterhouseCoopers, 'Windmill Eye Study', 23-4.

Figure 5.21: Clearance site, Baldwin and Price Street area, Windmill Lane, 2004



Source: Adam Carey, 'Clearance site, Baldwin and Price Street area, Windmill Lane', 8 January 2004. © Adam Carey. In the foreground is the site of refurbished deck-access flats cleared in 1998–99 and the remaining James Watt House. This tower block, a later addition to the estate in 1962, was also refurbished under Estate Action, but subsequently demolished in 2004–05.

Windmill Lane did not feature in the original neighbourhood management programme which ran in Sandwell from 2001, but gained a two-officer team in 2008–11. By then a study painted a favourable picture of inter-agency working in Windmill Lane.²¹⁸ Neighbourhood tasking, a ward-level partnership approach between the council and police, is credited with reducing anti-social behaviour, environmental crime and criminal damage.²¹⁹ However, in citing a 42 per cent fall in recorded crime in ten years, Cooper acknowledged: 'Breaking that perception of crime has always been a real problem'.²²⁰

²¹⁸ DBA Management Consultancy, 'Windmill Eye Service Provider Review—Interim Report', [consultancy report], Bawtry: DBA, 2010, 12–14.

²¹⁹ Cooper, 'Interviews'; Horton, 'Interview'; Bowman, 'Interview'; Wright, 'Interview'; Reid, 'Interview', Santokh Singh, 'Interview with Author', 21 May 2014. Singh was Smethwick town manager after 2008. Also

Soho and Victoria gained government funding in 2012 for 'Community First', a panel to plan local priorities for a new volunteer funding programme led by community projects and managed by Brushstrokes.²²¹ A priority for this partnership panel was to support 'Friends and Neighbours', a social enterprise bringing together the ex-neighbourhood management officers and residents previously involved in the 'Windmill Eye' masterplan.²²² Its volunteers provided social care, befriending and advocacy support in the ward, with council and Health Service funding.²²³ A Sandwell pilot for community-based support and prevention to recast demand for adult social care and reduce direct council provision, it attracted wider policy attention.²²⁴

see Sandwell MBC, 'Agenda Item No. 7—Smethwick Town Team Update: Smethwick Town Committee, Tuesday 18th March 2008', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2008; Sandwell MBC, 'Agenda Item No. 10—Towns and Neighbourhoods Smethwick Update: Smethwick Town Committee, Tuesday 24 March 2009', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2009.

²²⁰ Cooper, 'Interviews'.

²²¹ Brushstrokes Community Project, 'Community First', [government website], <<http://www.communityfirstbrushstrokes.btck.co.uk/>>, accessed 14 August 2015. Brushstrokes at St. Philip's Parish Centre, worked with local asylum-seekers and newcomers: Brushstrokes Community Project, 'Brushstrokes', [showcase website], <<http://www.brushstrokessandwell.org.uk/>>, accessed 14 August 2015.

²²² Reid, 'Interview'; Bowman, 'Interview'. Also see *Smethwick: An Eye to the Future* (Multistory, 2010), George Fleming (dir.)

²²³ Friends and Neighbours, 'Friends and Neighbours Soho and Victoria Business Plan', [corporate document], Smethwick: Friends and Neighbours Community Interest Company, 2011.

²²⁴ Sandwell MBC, 'Neighbourhood Working in Sandwell: Cabinet and Management Board Summit, 18 December 2013', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2013. Friends and Neighbours is the case study in this article: Patricia A. Jones, 'Community Capital and the Role of the State: An empowering approach to personalisation', *People, Place & Policy*, 7/3 (2013), 153–67, <<http://extra.shu.ac.uk/ppp-online/community-capital-and-the-role-of-the-state-an-empowering-approach-to-personalisation/>>, accessed 3 September 2014. Also see West Midlands Co-Production Network, 'Building Resilient Communities for Co-production: Minutes of the 9th meeting of the West Midlands Co-Production Network on 27 June 2013, hosted by Sandwell Council', [government website], <http://www.govint.org/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/Minutes_9th_Meeting_West_Midlands_Co-Production_Network_27June2013.pdf>, accessed 14 August 2015.

Private investment and public capital spending eventually gathered pace. The £30m Windmill Lane shopping centre opened in 2005 and employed many local residents as part of the council land-release agreement.²²⁵ This contrasted with a 'superstore' on the site opened in 1983 with £386,000 of IAP funding, but which closed twenty-nine months later.²²⁶ The three remaining Windmill Lane tower blocks received a £12m refurbishment. A simultaneous £25m programme in 2013–15 saw 228 houses built on four council-owned sites in Windmill Lane, supervised by a board including residents (Figure 5.15 and Figure 5.22).²²⁷ Two-fifths was affordable or social housing. Some interviewees saw this as a missed opportunity to 'change the social mix'.²²⁸ It can be seen as continued 'municipal labourism', and several new street names recalled past system-built blocks.²²⁹ Neighbourhood satisfaction had risen to 82 per cent.²³⁰ Population density, which plummeted by 71 per cent over eighty years in the Soho and Victoria areas, rose in 2001–11, with signs of overcrowding (Figure 5.23). Labour Party support in Soho and Victoria meanwhile reached 95 per cent and electoral turnout recovered to the metropolitan norm (Figure 5.24 and earlier Figure 5.13).²³¹

²²⁵ 'Dramatic transformation of deprivation black spot', *Express & Star*, 20 September 2005; Cooper, 'Meeting'. A forgotten nuclear bunker was discovered during the 2005 construction.

²²⁶ This followed a six-year campaign to secure the investment: Hallam, 'Interview'; 'Bakery site superstore?', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 3 March 1977; 'All systems go for Cape Hill', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 30 August 1979; 'Co-op's new superstore', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 10 October 1979; 'Superstore plan may be dropped', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 29 January 1981; 'Move to buy and demolish bakery', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 26 February 1981; 'Superstore set to open in autumn', *News Telephone*, 26 May 1983; '£2m superstore opening boosts jobs blackspot', *News Telephone*, 3 November 1983; 'Closure blow for store after two years trading', *News Telephone*, 30 January 1986.

²²⁷ 'Homes and jobs boost for Smethwick', *Sandwell Herald*, Autumn 2014, 15; Cooper, 'Interviews'. The new-build was funded by the government's Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

²²⁸ Anonymised viewpoint.

²²⁹ Such as George Ryder Road, French Walls Road and Hamilton Drive, although the previous Hamilton House was named after much-respected local doctor in the 1950s: Roberts, 'God Bless Yer, Nurse!', 12; Trevor Harris, 'Interview with Author', 10 September 2013; Roger Page, 'Interview with Author', 15 July 2013. Trevor Harris was a retired Smethwick Headteacher who grew up in Smethwick. Page was a Sandwell Labour councillor for Bristnall ward and past resident of Windmill Lane.

²³⁰ Vector Research, 'Household Survey', survey tabulations for boosted 'Windmill Eye' area sample.

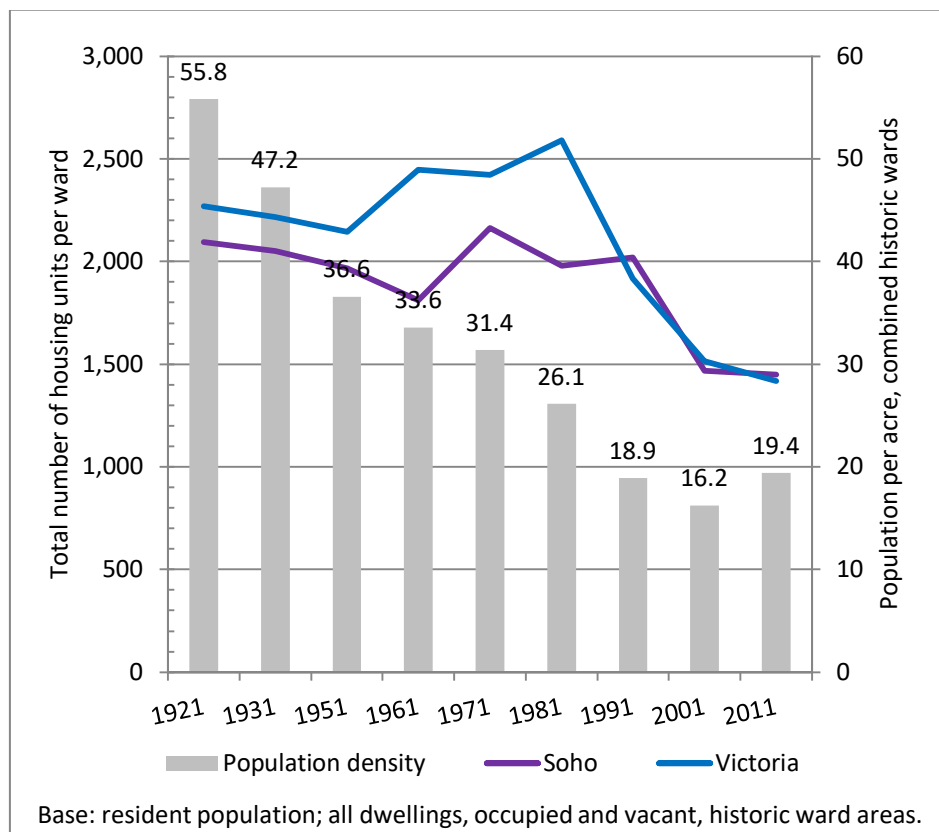
²³¹ See Special Note 19: Electoral Politics in Smethwick and Sandwell.

Figure 5.22: New-build, Baldwin and Price Street area, Windmill Lane, 2015



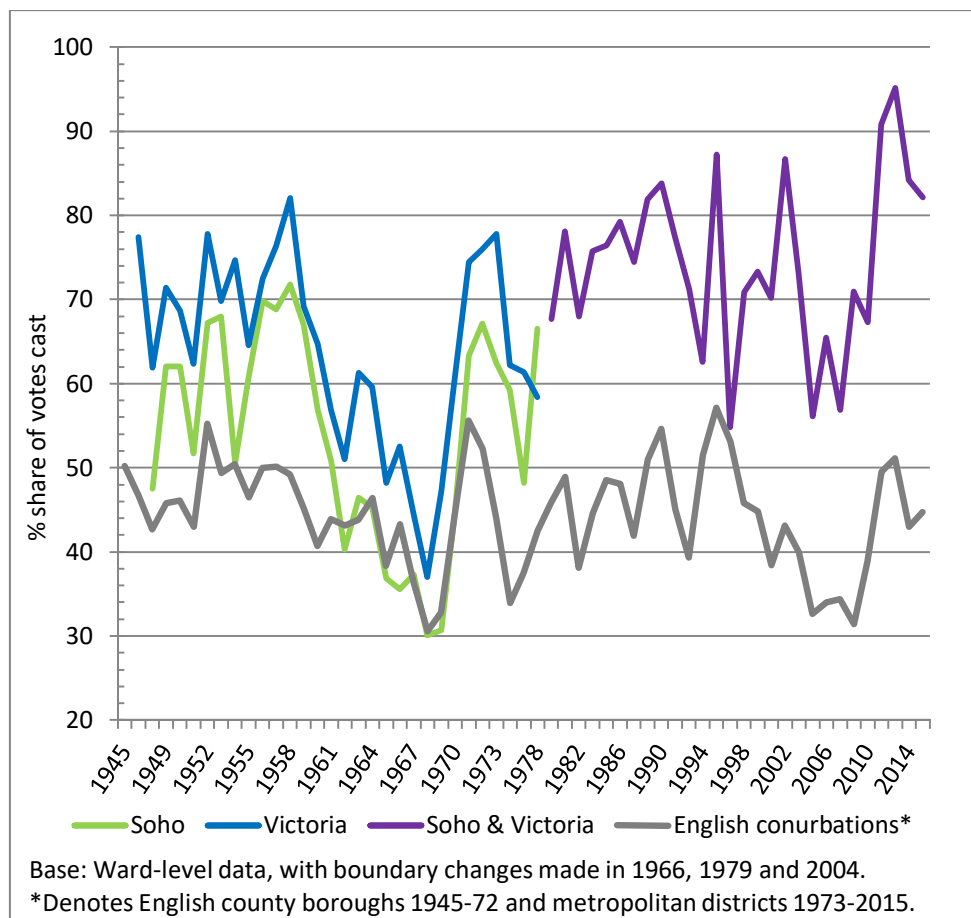
Source: Adam Carey, 'New-build, Baldwin and Price Street area, Windmill Lane', 2 July 2015 © Adam Carey. View is close to the site of the 2004 picture at Figure 5.21 with St. Philip's RC Church visible in the background.

Figure 5.23: Housing stock and Population density, Soho and Victoria, 1921 to 2011



Source: See Special Note 5: Creating a Population time series for historic Smethwick; Special Note 6: Housing data for Smethwick.

Figure 5.24: Labour vote in Soho and Victoria, 1945 to 2015



Source: Special Note 4: Defining Smethwick—Changing boundaries and area identity; Special Note 19: Electoral Politics in Smethwick and Sandwell.

The portrayal of Windmill Lane in PwC’s 2007 study meanwhile illustrated the ingrained stigma affecting it.²³² In revisiting the terrain of their 1988–89 reports, PwC appeared to encapsulate local stakeholder perceptions.²³³ The report made the sweeping claim that the area ‘represents everything that needs to change’.²³⁴ It continued: ‘Agencies report that managing the area is increasingly unsustainable with an underlying culture of benefit dependency, crime and complex needs manifesting itself in anti-social behaviour issues, and organised crime and disorder’.²³⁵ At the same time, the study overstated greatly the extent,

²³² See Special Note 43: The Windmill Lane ‘mythscape’—2007 PwC study.

²³³ PricewaterhouseCoopers, ‘Windmill Eye Study’, 4.

²³⁴ PricewaterhouseCoopers, ‘Windmill Eye Study’, 5.

²³⁵ PricewaterhouseCoopers, ‘Windmill Eye Study’, 5.

influence and specific targeting of various past Smethwick area-based initiatives in relation to Windmill Lane. Apart from brief references to inadequate street services and housing allocations, it omitted serious discussion of historic place management of the area, with the problematic issue of community engagement and 'regeneration fatigue' ignored.²³⁶

To conclude this section, a 20-year review found the Estate Action investment attracted criticism, rather than the inadequate subsequent housing management and street services. 'Dumping' lettings practices continued in new guises, topping-up poverty. Arguably duplicative community facilities appeared, but no ABI. Windmill Lane experienced piecemeal clearance and vacant sites; and peculiarly, plans in the background but until 2011 no actual neighbourhood plan: 'regeneration fatigue' without regeneration. The local received wisdom recorded in 2007 overlooked improvement already underway, for example, falling crime and growing social capital. The overall consequence of this curiously 'storyless' history after 1995 was, as Williams observed about the process of estate residualisation, 'the area stands subsequently to be blamed for its inability to respond to outside help'.²³⁷ So policy and management attention largely withdrew after the HAT and Estate Action interlude, within a 'mythscape' of supposed failed regeneration.²³⁸ Physical investment eventually gathered pace in the period to 2015. Long-term inactivity in Windmill

²³⁶ PwC said 'it was reported' that the area had the same *per capita* allocation as a 'more settled area' due to a 'one-size-fits-all' approach by the council: PricewaterhouseCoopers, 'Windmill Eye Study', 9. A national study identified low-income households and higher-density housing as risk factors in cleanliness and the importance of effective targeting of resources backed by neighbourhood intelligence: Annette Hastings, Nick Bailey *et al.*, 'Street Cleanliness in Deprived and Better-off Neighbourhoods: A clean sweep?', [academic study], York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2009, 7.

²³⁷ 'Social Residualisation: a brief description', extract taken from Brian Williams, 'Stemming the Urban Haemorrhage', [research report], Hull: Orchard Park Environment Redevelopment Association, 1999; <http://urbanrim.org.uk/residual.htm>, accessed 11 August 2015. Davidson *et al* also identified a consequence of 'regeneration fatigue' where local communities themselves may end up bearing the brunt of responsibility when regeneration attempts fail: Davidson, McGuinness *et al.*, 'Living in a Regeneration Area', 56.

²³⁸ The term 'mythscape' is from Duncan Bell as cited in Parker and Karner, 'Alum Rock Road', 308.

Lane nevertheless contrasted strongly with the improved position in twenty estates across England, evaluated at intervals over twenty-five years to 2006. Their gains were linked to intensive estate management beginning in 1979–81, then clearance, estate redesign, mixed-tenure new-build, transfers from council control, refurbishment and area-based initiatives.²³⁹

5.4 'Not a clever place to be': Replacing housing in Black Patch

The fate of Black Patch epitomised the difficulty Sandwell experienced in managing decline from 1974. Like nearby Windmill Lane, the structural legacy was challenging. In discussing Smethwick Eling nonetheless concluded: 'The worst policy impact has been housing policy of the past and the worst-end of housing policy has got to be Black Patch'.²⁴⁰ This section argues a historical assessment should more fairly also include planning policy, regeneration activity and the wider governance culture since 1945.

Black Patch developed during the nineteenth-century as an enclave of housing framed by the Soho Foundry, two railway junctions and two streams forming Smethwick's north-eastern boundary.²⁴¹ Informal gypsy camps on the 'black patch', the possible birthplace of Charlie Chaplin, ended through evictions in 1904–9 and creation of a park by

²³⁹ Rebecca Tunstall and Alice Coulter, 'Twenty-five Years on Twenty Estates—Turning the Tide?', [academic study], Bristol: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2006, ix–xiii.

²⁴⁰ Eling, 'Interviews'. This area is generally called Black Patch, but is also known as Merry Hill and was often described in this way in council committee reports: hence 'Merry Hill Infant School', but less obviously, 'Merryhill Court' and even 'Blackpatch'.

²⁴¹ The first housing was a row of cottages within Soho Foundry, where William Murdock lived in 1817: G. C. Baugh, M. W. Greenslade, and D. A. Johnson, 'Smethwick', in M. W. Greenslade (ed.), *History of the County of Stafford* (The Victoria History of the Counties of England, XVII; London: University of London, Institute of Historical Research, 1976), 94. A survey found that 40 houses in Wellington Street had to share three privies in 1871: Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 120. Black Patch was apparently one of the last places in the Midlands to be connected to the national grid: 'End of a community: the sad demise of Black Patch', *News Telephone*, 26 November 1981.

Birmingham Corporation (Figure 5.25).²⁴² Temporary houses were erected on the Birmingham side and Smethwick Corporation built two maisonette blocks by 1953.²⁴³ This pre-empted the postwar development plans of the two local authorities, which eventually confirmed residential use at Black Patch. In contrast, the plans allowed for housing clearance and industrial use at the nearby Mornington-Wattville Road locality, a similar cross-border area.²⁴⁴ Kitchener Street and the allotments were transferred to Warley from Birmingham, when the boundary was aligned to the railways in 1966.²⁴⁵

Smethwick commissioned a further tower block and five medium-rise blocks, completed under Warley in 1967 (Figure 5.26).²⁴⁶ This required extra school places, but Birmingham ended provision for Smethwick children in nearby Winson Green. Warley opened an infant school in the park rather than transport children across North Smethwick.²⁴⁷ The 1974 Warley Structure Plan recognised that the new housing and school made the complete removal of residential development unrealistic, despite the lack of

²⁴² Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 94; Romany Jib, 'Gypsies of the Blackpatch', [showcase website], <<http://www.gypsyjib.com/page/Gypsies+of+the+Blackpatch>>, accessed 18 March 2014; 'Was Charlie Chaplin a Gypsy?', *Guardian*, 11 February 2011; 'Charlie Chaplin's son unveils memorial at Smethwick where his father is believed to have been born', *Birmingham Mail*, 26 July 2015.

²⁴³ Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', Minute 5810: 'Land: Foundry Lane', meeting held on 9 January 1950; Philip Davis, 'Remembering Lennard Gardens (1953-2004)', *Smethwick Heritage Telephone*, 41/Issue Issue Date, 22.

²⁴⁴ Smethwick Corporation, 'Town Plan', [council report], *County Borough of Smethwick Development Plan*, Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1955; Birmingham City Council, 'City of Birmingham Development Plan: Statement and maps as approved with modifications by the Minister for Housing and Local Government, December 1960', [government report], Birmingham: Birmingham City Council, 1961, Town and Programme Maps, Sheet 14.

²⁴⁵ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 94.

²⁴⁶ Warley Corporation, 'Housing Development Committee Minutes', 'Progress Report at 27 May 1966', meeting held on 1 June 1966.

²⁴⁷ The school was opened in 1969, but children aged 7–11 continued to travel across industrial North Smethwick to Albion Junior School at Halfords Lane. Restrictive covenants on the school site in Black Patch Park were bypassed by special parliamentary procedure: John Murden, 'A History of Warley Education Service', [research study], Great Wyrley: John Murden, 2011, 55.

services and poor environment adjacent to industry.²⁴⁸ It identified the need to increase the neighbourhood by using part of the park and allotments to build 50-60 homes.²⁴⁹ This was successfully resisted by allotment-holders.²⁵⁰

Severe unfitness in houses originally built by Avery was an issue in early Sandwell.²⁵¹ Murdock Road was cleared by 1979; Avery Road followed community pressure, when removal of Kitchener Street was also approved.²⁵² A two-page press article in 1981 identified the consequent impact on neighbourhood viability by halving the housing stock. It reported that comprehensive area clearance, including the now 'difficult-to-let' council flat and maisonettes was excluded on cost grounds by the council, with selective mixed-tenure resupply preferred.²⁵³ Accordingly, housing committee approved environmental improvements, extra council flats and a shop in the 1982/83 new-build programme, and self-build and private development.²⁵⁴ Eight council flats were built c.1982.²⁵⁵ In contrast

²⁴⁸ Warley Corporation, 'Written Statement', [council report], *Warley Structure Plan*, Smethwick: Warley Corporation, 1974, 41.

²⁴⁹ Warley Corporation, 'Written Statement', 42.

²⁵⁰ 'Fight to save allotments', *News Telephone*, 21 March 1974. The Warley planning officer was quoted as saying: 'We want to provide services in this area, but we need more houses there to be able to do so'. It was argued that the allotment holders were mainly Birmingham residents and that that Warley should provide alternative allotments in more suitable occasions. This pattern of Birmingham usage has persisted since: Sandwell MBC, 'Smethwick Area Action Plan—Issues and Options Paper', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 2006, 26.

²⁵¹ Prestidge, 'Interview'. These company houses had been previously acquired by Smethwick Corporation from Avery and remained unimproved. By the late 1970s, they were in danger of collapse: Doug Parish, 'Interview with Author', 16 December 2013. Parish was an environmental health officer at Sandwell MBC from 1974, with responsibility for private sector clearance until 1996.

²⁵² 'House like a slum', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 17 January 1980; 'Avery Road folk may be rehoused', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 28 May 1981; 'Area may be cleared', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 4 June 1981; 'Avery Road tenants "Over the Moon" about re-housing news', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 11 June 1981.

²⁵³ 'End of a community—Sad demise of Black Patch', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 26 November 1981. Also see 'Avery Rd tenants "over the moon" about rehousing news', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 11 June 1981. Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 130/81; 'Avery Road, Smethwick', meeting held on 8 June 1981. Councillors resolved that 'officers report further to the committee in due course on the options available to the council for the use of the whole site'.

²⁵⁴ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 24/82; 'Merry Hill, Smethwick', meeting held on 18 January 1982.

with Windmill Lane, a multi-storey car park was readily removed.²⁵⁶ It was shortly resolved to demolish the existing youth centre with the wider cleared Foundry Lane site sold for private housing.²⁵⁷

Environmental schemes and a new youth and community centre in Black Patch were agreed in 1984, and sale of housing land was reconfirmed, only to be unsuccessful.²⁵⁸ By this point, pupil numbers at the Infant school had fallen from 102 to 35 in 10 years, with a further decline in train. Despite this obvious unviability, the council expediently agreed keeping Year 4 pupils at Merry Hill for a further year, rather than transferring to a junior school in North Smethwick. A closure option was not presented to the committee.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁵ They were probably built in the 1982/83 new-build programme. They are shown in a plan of 1986: Sandwell MBC, 'Minutes of the Development Control Committee', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, [1974–90], Planning permission DC/20765, meeting held on 8 October 1986.

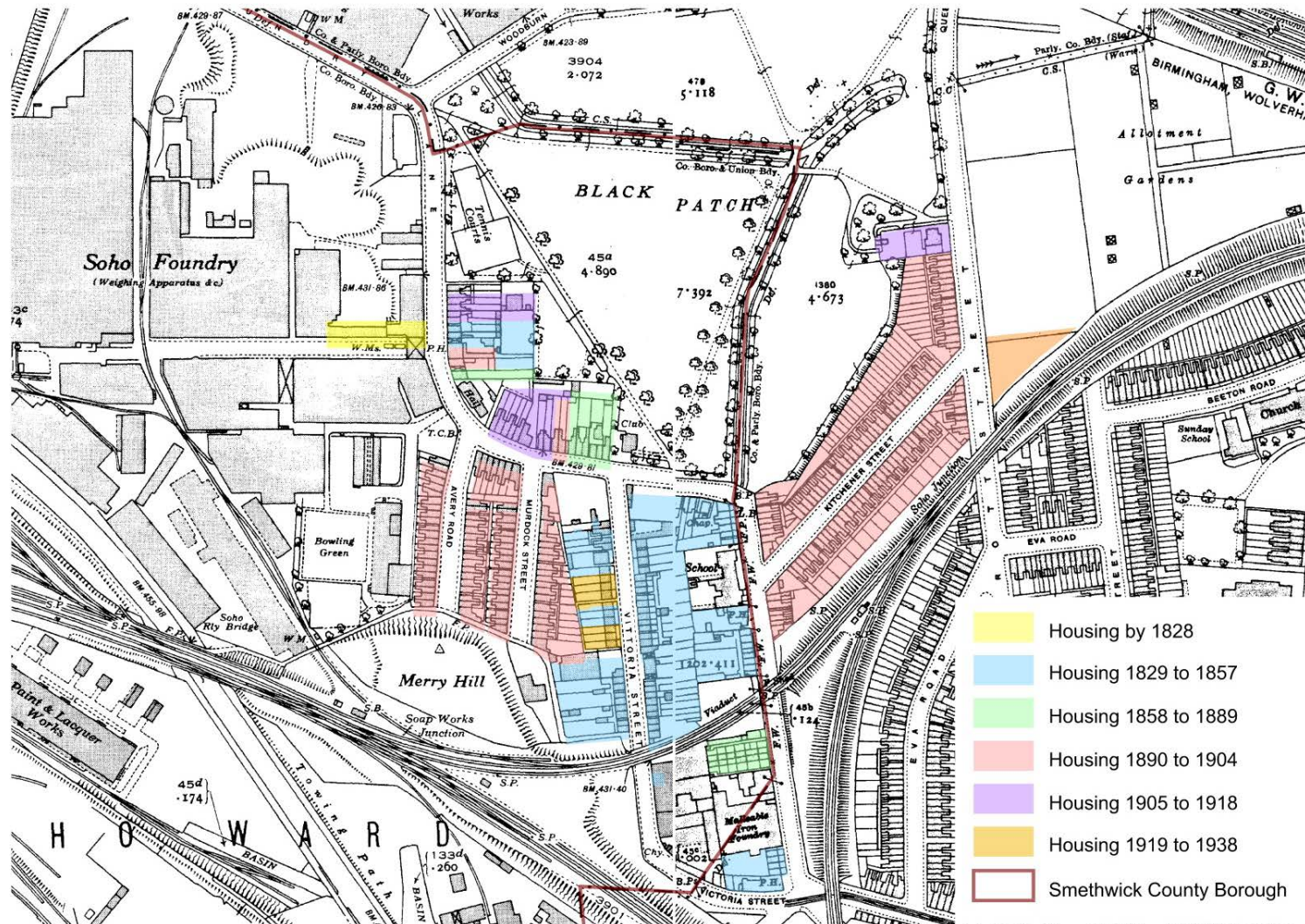
²⁵⁶ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 138/80; 'Multi-storey car port, Merry Hill, Smethwick', meeting held on 19 June 1980; Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 15/81; 'Car Port, Boulton Road, Merry Hill Estate, Smethwick', meeting held on 19 January 1981. See SN 37: Multi-storey Car Parks.

²⁵⁷ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 194/83; 'Merry Hill/Black Patch, Smethwick', meeting held on 26 September 1983.

²⁵⁸ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 47/84; 'Merry Hill Youth and Community Centre, Smethwick', meeting held on 27 February 1984; 'Bold move to boost image of Merry Hill', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 25 February 1982; '£1m scheme for "forgotten" folk of Smethwick', *News Telephone*, 31 March 1983; 'On the line . . . a clean new image', *News Telephone*, 19 February 1984. An education committee report in 1985 referred to abortive efforts to sell sites to a private developer: Sandwell MBC, 'Minutes of the Education Committee', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, [1974–90], Minute 23/85: 'Merry Hill Infant School', Appendix D of the Schools Sub-Committee, held on 20 May 1985.

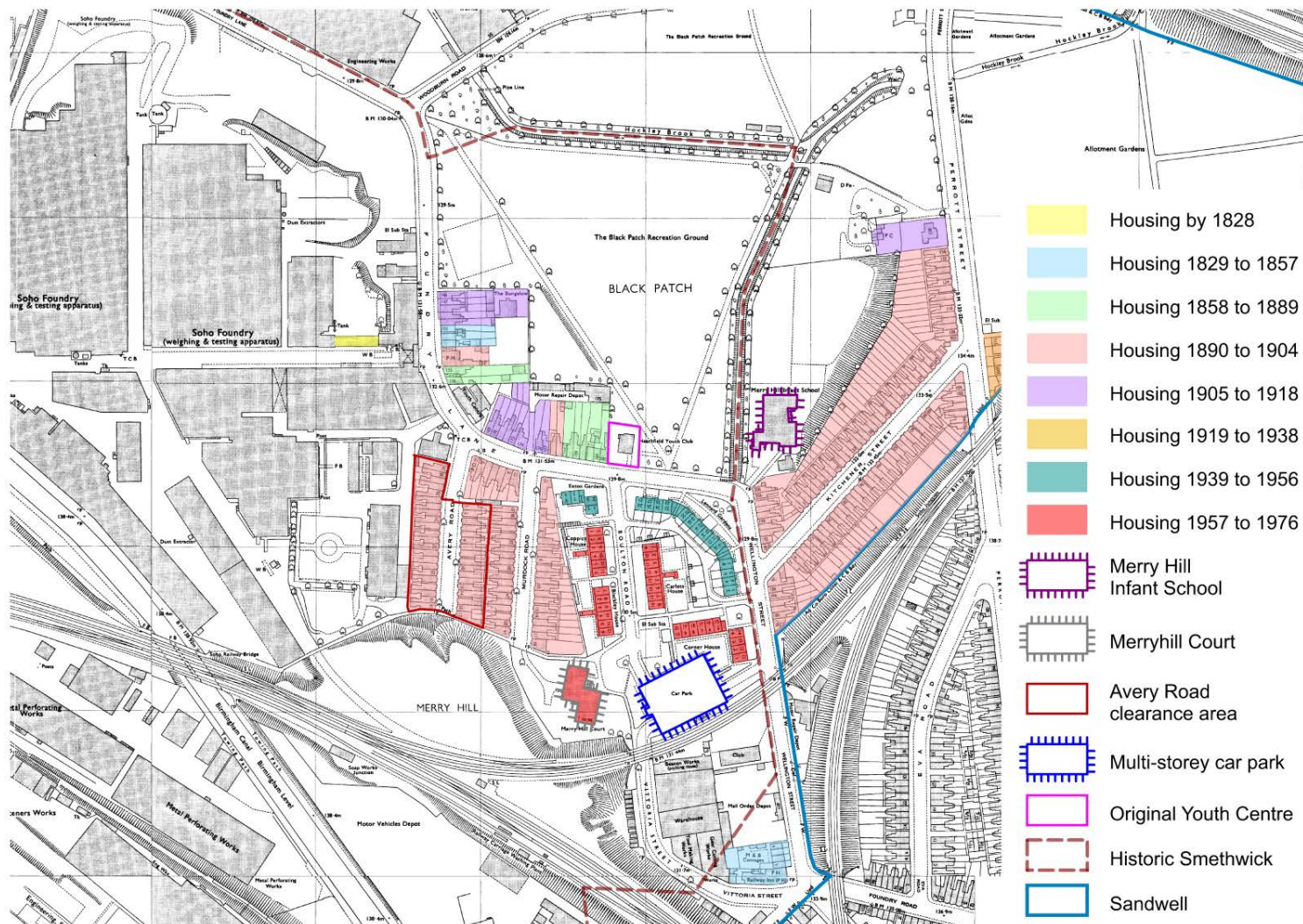
²⁵⁹ This was despite an explicit reference to denying children the breadth and variety of the educational experience at the junior school. It indicated that the busing service to Albion Junior could not be guaranteed to be available to them for parents opted to transfer at the normal Year 4 stage: Sandwell MBC, 'Education Committee Minutes', Minute 23/85: 'Merry Hill Infant School', Appendix D of the Schools Sub-Committee, held on 20 May 1985.

Figure 5.25: Housing in Black Patch, c.1938



Source: See Special Note 4: Defining Smethwick—Changing boundaries and area identity. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A Landmark Information Group Ltd/EDINA product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

Figure 5.26: Housing in Black Patch, c.1976



Source: See Special Note 4: Defining Smethwick—Changing boundaries and area identity. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A Landmark Information Group Ltd/EDINA product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

As seen, low demand for council flats affected Black Patch by 1981. Press references to the rehousing of 'problem families' were akin to Windmill Lane.²⁶⁰ So Black Patch was similarly targeted for Sandwell's 'open lettings policy', attracting single-person inflow.²⁶¹ Yet in 1988, an empty flat at Merryhill Court had been available for four years.²⁶² A consultancy study reported in 1989.²⁶³ The resulting policy committee minute noted the need for 'comprehensive action to sustain viable community facilities; that the size of the community must be increased'.²⁶⁴ The study proposed stock transfer to a non-profit trust and the partial redevelopment of the park and allotments for significant new housing. The committee rejected this in favour of 'housing-led regeneration' with full corporate support. But the agreed implementation plan did not happen.²⁶⁵

In February 1990, it was decided to demolish the largely-empty and recently fire-damaged Merryhill Court.²⁶⁶ Yet a further fire at the tower block in July resulted in the death of a remaining elderly tenant.²⁶⁷ An investigation blamed the lack of firebreaks in this

²⁶⁰ 'End of a Community', *Smethwick News Telephone*.

²⁶¹ Sandwell MBC, 'Education Committee Minutes', Minute 23/85: 'Merry Hill Infant School', Appendix D of the Schools Sub-Committee, held on 20 May 1985.

²⁶² 'Tower flat that nobody wants', *News Telephone*, 27 October 1988.

²⁶³ After some delay: Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 49/88; 'Partnership Renewal of the Built Environment', meeting held on 22 February 1988; 'Group unveils blueprint for run-down area', *Express & Star*, 20 August 1988.

²⁶⁴ Sandwell MBC, 'Minutes of the Policy Committee', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, [1974–90], Minute 160/89: 'Black Patch Renewal and Strategy: PROBE', meeting held on 3 July 1989.

²⁶⁵ Policy committee resolved that a report and timetable for regeneration be submitted to the next meeting of appropriate committees; that discussion on the proposals held as a matter of urgency with local residents and allotment holders; and that a working group of officers progress the redevelopment of Black Patch. What could be clearer? A single report was presented to planning (see below) but no other reporting to policy or other committees can be identified. The disjuncture of policy and action is similar to the disappearance of the 'Smethwick Initiative' discussed in Chapter 4. The author sat on the policy committee in this period, yet cannot explain how accountability to agreed decisions was not enforced.

²⁶⁶ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 17/90: 'Action by Director of Housing: (16) Merryhill Court, Smethwick', meeting held on 19 February 1990. The minute referred to the 30 per cent occupancy, severe fire damage and the transfer of remaining tenants from the block.

²⁶⁷ Nevin, 'Interviews'; Wilkinson, 'Interview'.

design.²⁶⁸ The planning committee meanwhile decided to market the remaining flats and vacant sites for private sector refurbishment and new-build.²⁶⁹ Possibly this step was not proceeded with or proved abortive, as with past efforts. There is no contemporary council record to explain why Focus housing association built twenty-six properties and a women's refuge on part of the landholding at Foundry Lane in 1990–91 (Figure 5.27).²⁷⁰ The collapsing demand for the remaining existing social housing at Black Patch by this point made this resupply strategically unwise and which attracted subsequent criticism.²⁷¹

A housing committee report in 1992 on the future of Black Patch identified a 45 per cent vacancy rate in an unpopular area.²⁷² It identified rental loss from voids, but not that rent arrears were over eight times the Sandwell average.²⁷³ The report suggested that routine or even substantial capital investment would not address the 'long-term problems

²⁶⁸ A boy also died at the block in 1974 due to inadequate safety measures; another died in 1964 at the unsecured construction site. See Special Note 44: Fatalities at Merryhill Court, Black Patch.

²⁶⁹ Sandwell MBC, 'Minutes of the Land and Town Planning Committee', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, [1974–90], Minute 58/90: 'Black Patch Regeneration Initiative', meeting held on 15 March 1990.

²⁷⁰ There is no reference to Foundry Lane in development control (DC) minutes in 1988/89 or 1989/90. From 1990/91, more powers were delegated to committees and sub-committees, and development control decisions were no longer reported to full council, so are not now publicly available. However, the council decision to market land covered two sites in Kitchener Street and Foundry Lane totalling 3.88 hectares. A map examination shows the Kitchener Street area covered 2 hectares. Planning permission was given in 1986 for a period of five years to Copec housing association to develop 0.88 hectares at Foundry Lane: Sandwell MBC, 'Development Control Committee Minutes', Planning permission DC/20765, meeting held on 8 October 1986. So for some reason, the permitted Copec/Focus site was included in the approved wider sale. This sale did not happen. The originally-agreed social housing development then went ahead before planning permission expired in 1991. The need to 'use-or-lose' approved Housing Association Grant may have been a factor, but the council's practical leverage to encourage or discourage development on land it owned would have been considerable.

²⁷¹ Cooper, 'Interviews'; Horton, 'Interview'; Wilkinson, 'Interview'; Lodder, 'Interview'; Parish, 'Interview'; Monro, 'Interview'.

²⁷² Sandwell MBC, 'Minutes of the Housing Strategy Committee', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, [1990–2000], Minute 48/92: 'The Future for Black Patch, Smethwick', meeting held on 7 July 1992. This did not refer to the previous 'Black Patch Regeneration Initiative'.

²⁷³ The rental loss from voids at Black Patch was £74,000 a year. Rent arrears in March 1992 averaged £572.23 compared to £69.05 across the entire Sandwell stock: Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 58. Such arrears implied a major problem with the housing and may have reflected past allocations policy ('dumping').

of the estate' or 'attract further community facilities'. It disingenuously argued that complete demolition 'would be inconsistent' with the recent £1.6m Focus investment; and 'might pre-empt' a public local enquiry into the council's draft statutory plan, which now designated existing vacant sites for industrial use.²⁷⁴ The preferred solution was to pass 103 flats to Focus for improvement and short-term letting. It was some way from the 'housing-led regeneration' approach agreed in 1989. The transfer was made two years later, during which time one of the blocks was cleared.

Focus refurbished 44 flats in 1995/96 and marketed heavily in Birmingham to let the stock.²⁷⁵ An SRB-funded survey found that 84 per cent of tenants were female and mainly unemployed single parents living in an isolated locality already containing a women's refuge (Figure 5.28). Some 27 per cent were aged 16–20, reflecting social services' placements.²⁷⁶ The infant school had finally closed in 1995 and 44 children went to 19 different schools.²⁷⁷ A new bus service was negotiated in 1997, but proved as short-lived as past campaigns.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁴ Clearance would surely have been defensible at public enquiry and was anyway imperative in terms of the landlord function. But the transfer avoided council expenditure on clearance or refurbishment and Focus could attract Housing Corporation funding.

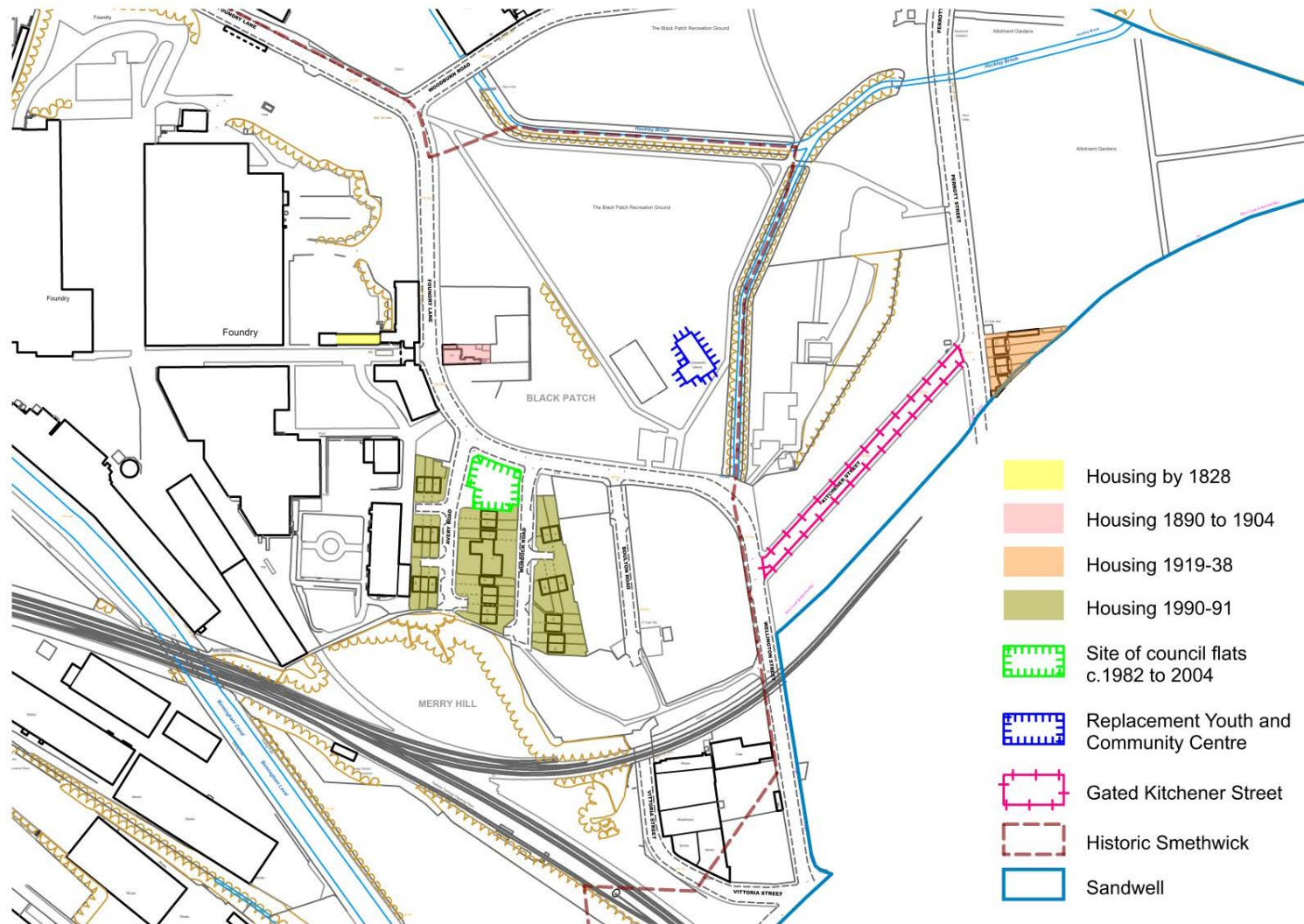
²⁷⁵ Wilkinson, 'Interview'. The Focus survey found that 61 per cent had lived in the property less than 12 months, reflecting the 50 per cent 'repopulation' of the area. But the survey remarked on the transient nature of the population because of the 'very poor' perception of Black Patch as a residential area: Focus Housing Group, 'Black Patch Area Audit', [statistical report], Birmingham: Focus Housing Group: Community Regeneration Unit, 1997, 3, 8.

²⁷⁶ Focus Housing Group, 'Black Patch Audit', 7.

²⁷⁷ Focus Housing Group, 'Black Patch Audit', 18.

²⁷⁸ Focus Housing Group, 'Black Patch Audit', 22. This recalled an unsuccessful campaign in 1978–79 to improve bus services and an 'experimental' extra bus service in 1954: 'Improved bus service for Merry Hill', *Smethwick Civic News*, October 1954; 'Merry Hill gets buses', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 9 February 1978; 'Merry Hill may be getting a bus at last', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 1 November 1979; 'Bus no use to anyone—claim', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 8 November 1979.

Figure 5.27: Housing in Black Patch, c.2007



Source: See Special Note 4: Defining Smethwick—Changing boundaries and area identity. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A Landmark Information Group Ltd/EDINA product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

Figure 5.28: Aerial view of Black Patch, 2002



Source: 'Aerial view of Black Patch, 9 September 2002', from CSR Partnership, *North Smethwick Canalside Delivery Plan*, 2004, Project file. © CSR Partnership (dissolved company). Reproduced with permission of Freshlife Consulting Ltd: Peter White, 18 February 2016.

The 2002 housing strategy envisaged a 'sensitive managed decline' and exit strategy, in conjunction with Focus and the local community, for the 'eventual clearance' of the stock at the end of the seven-year (originally 10-year) lease.²⁷⁹ Void levels had risen again by 2002 and the exit strategy appeared to be simply decanting the remaining tenants.²⁸⁰ It was decided to remove residential use by 2005, while 'working with residents of Blackpatch (sic)

²⁷⁹ The strategy argued: 'From a purely housing point of view it is considered that the area has no long-term residential future. There is limited demand for the area and it is the view of the council that it will remain so': Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Strategy for Smethwick', para 5.15.

²⁸⁰ Khamis recalled leading a focus group in Black Patch for the Smethwick masterplan in 2000, where residents recognised the unviability of the area and did not oppose relocation. They just wanted to be moved as a community: Khamis, 'Interviews'. This was just four years after the 'repopulation' of the area following the Focus investment.

to develop genuine housing options'.²⁸¹ The last Focus-managed blocks and the council flats built only 21 years earlier were demolished, expediently using funding from Urban Living under grant conditions which required replacement housing.²⁸² The Audit Commission criticised the lack of community engagement, while noting 'there appear to be no plans at all for the [area], aside from relocating a homeless hostel there'.²⁸³

This further phase of clearance left 32 houses in Black Patch compared to 417 in 1967 (Figure 5.29).²⁸⁴ Midland Heart (the successor to Focus) unsuccessfully applied for Urban Living funding to demolish their 26 units in 2010.²⁸⁵ The youth and community centre, rebuilt in the park and subsequently attracting SRB1 funding was 'rarely open' in 1997.²⁸⁶ Closed by 2007 or earlier, it stood empty and vandalised in 2015 (Figure 5.30).²⁸⁷ Equally, Kitchener Street was gated-off in 2008, after 18 recorded crime or anti-social behaviour incidents in 12 months (Figure 5.31).²⁸⁸ A contemporary assessment of Black Patch was: 'I'd stick that in the 'too-difficult-to-do box' at the moment'.²⁸⁹

²⁸¹ Sandwell MBC, 'Minute 52/03: Implementation of a Housing Plan for the Blackpatch Area, Smethwick (Forward Plan Ref. No. H068)—Decisions of the Cabinet Member for Housing, 14 July 2003', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2003.

²⁸² In 2009, the council attempted to sell three sites on Foundry Lane for light industrial units. Had this been successful funding would have been repayable to Urban Living and Advantage West Midlands (AWM), the regional development agency: Sandwell MBC, 'Disposal of Land at Foundry Lane, Smethwick: Agenda Item 6: Report to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport, 21 July 2008', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2008. The closures of Urban Living and AWM in 2011 removed this restriction.

²⁸³ Audit Commission, 'Market Renewal: Urban Living', [government report], *Strategic Review: February 2006*, London: Audit Commission, 2006, 40. This hostel was in the building formerly used by the Sandwell Women's Refuge.

²⁸⁴ This comprised the 26 Focus/Midland Heart units, a pub and five houses south of the allotments at the end of a stretch of houses in the Birmingham part of Perrott Road.

²⁸⁵ The source for this is the personal knowledge of the author, who worked at Urban Living from 2008–10.

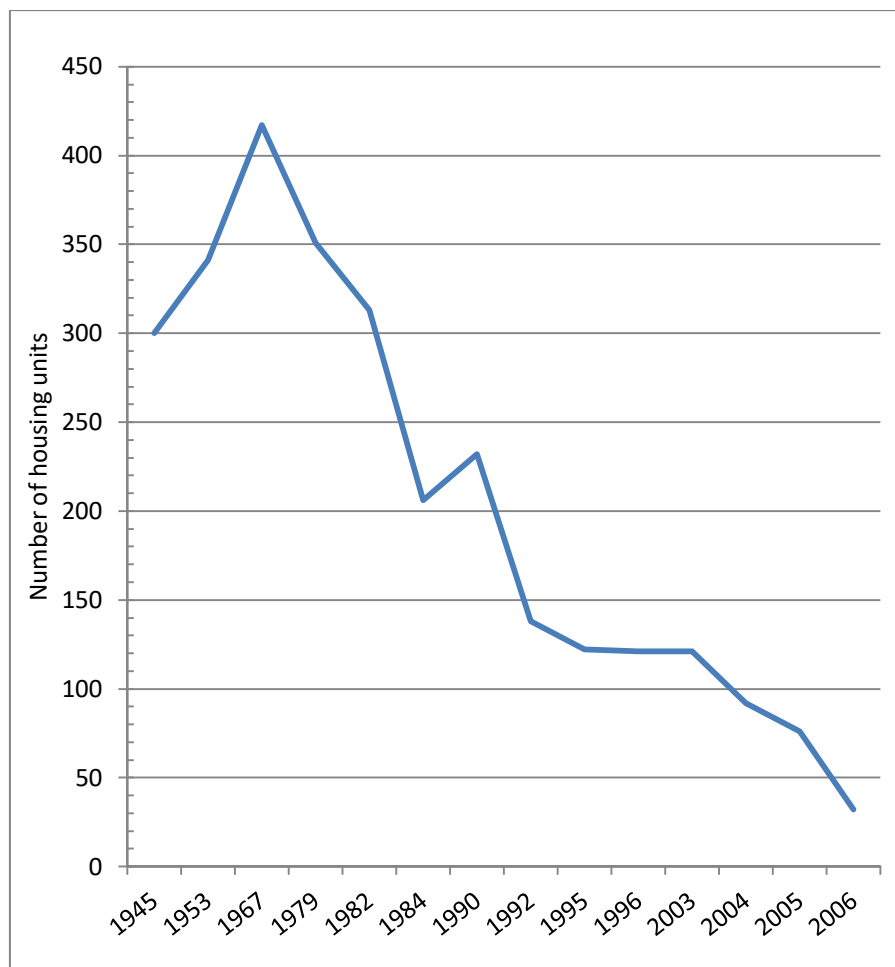
²⁸⁶ Focus Housing Group, 'Black Patch Audit', 4.

²⁸⁷ Sandwell MBC, 'Smethwick Area Action Plan—Development Plan Document', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 2008, 50.

²⁸⁸ 'Final steps to tackle fly-tipping', *Express & Star*, 8 December 2008.

²⁸⁹ Anonymised officer comment.

Figure 5.29: Housing stock in Black Patch, 1945 to 2006



Source: See Special Note 25: Scale of Housing Clearance in Smethwick.

Figure 5.30: Closed Youth and Community Centre, Black Patch Park, 2015



Source: Adam Carey, 'Closed Youth and Community Centre, Black Patch Park', 2 July 2015. © Adam Carey.

Figure 5.31: Kitchener Street, Black Patch, 2007 and 2015



Source: Adam Carey, 'Kitchener Street, Black Patch', left-right: 26 June 2007 and 2 July 2015. © Adam Carey.

The ongoing decline of the now mainly-council owned area generated a stream of studies.²⁹⁰ These included at least five for the Soho Foundry and several area masterplans, while council policy oscillated.²⁹¹ A 1999 planning study argued for comprehensive redevelopment of the area to reflect its mainly-industrial use and residential isolation. It nonetheless proposed a mixed-use allocation in part of the park, with a 'proportion of residential and community development'.²⁹² In a change of approach, the approved statutory plan confirmed this area entirely for industrial use, with an intended 'Technology Park'.²⁹³ The 2002 housing strategy had remarked: 'The vision for a Soho Technology Park is a welcome departure from a sustained period of uncertainty for the future of Black Patch'.²⁹⁴ However, this designation met with opposition from the 'Friends of Black Patch Park' and the economic demand proved illusory.²⁹⁵ A joint bid with Birmingham for Soho Foundry to be a World Heritage Site fell through.²⁹⁶ The full public open-space designation was restored in the 2008 Area Action Plan.²⁹⁷ The council in 2014 agreed to sell Kitchener Street for redevelopment as an eco-energy park, using Regional Growth Fund support to

²⁹⁰ Peter White, 'Interview with Author', 26 September 2007. White was a fellow director of CSR Partnership with the author and led the Smethwick Canalside Study for Smethwick SRB4.

²⁹¹ Anne Upson, 'Soho Technology Park Historic Landscape Appraisal', [consultancy report], Alderton: Anne Upson, 2002; King Sturge, 'Soho Park Masterplan Options Appraisal: Draft report', [consultancy report], Leeds: King Sturge, 2007; Building Design Partnership and King Sturge LLP, 'Smethwick Soho Park Final Masterplan Report', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Building Design Partnership, 2008; Alan Baxter and Associates, 'Soho Foundry Study', [consultancy report], n.d.; L&R Consulting, 'Soho Foundry Re-Use Strategy', [consultancy report], n.d. This is believed to be an incomplete list of studies.

²⁹² Sandwell MBC, 'Draft Smethwick Masterplan', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 1999, sec. 'Black Patch'.

²⁹³ Sandwell MBC, 'Unitary Development Plan—Written Statement, Proposals Map and Inset Plans', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, Planning and Development Services, 2004.

²⁹⁴ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Strategy for Smethwick', para 5.15.

²⁹⁵ Sandwell MBC, 'Issues and Options', 23-4; 'Park fight victory', *Birmingham Mail*, 22 March 2007; Khamis, 'Interviews'.

²⁹⁶ White, 'Interview'.

²⁹⁷ Sandwell MBC, 'Smethwick AAP', 50.

create 59 jobs, but negotiations were still ongoing early in 2016.²⁹⁸ Soho Foundry was patched-up c.2007 and remained ringed with scrapyards in 2015, when Avery closed its weighing museum.²⁹⁹ At this point the council was producing a new regeneration strategy for the area.³⁰⁰

To conclude this section, Black Patch after 1945 was ‘not a clever place to be’.³⁰¹ Smethwick mistakenly retained Black Patch for housing in an era of wholesale clearance, but Sandwell compounded this in 1982–90 by rebuilding in a collapsing environment and vacillating thereafter, where necessary ignoring its own decisions. An unviable school limped on. Housing mismanagement played its part, for example, by passing stock to a housing association to let to vulnerable woman, in this most isolated locality. By 2015, it was a wasteland of closed facilities, dumped rubbish and stymied use, adjacent to decaying world heritage. The ignominy of Black Patch was more squarely a historic planning failure, and one that starkly exposed wider local authority deficiencies.

²⁹⁸ Sandwell MBC, 'Disposal of Land at Kitchener Street, Smethwick (Key Decision Ref. No. AML085): Asset Management and Land Disposal Cabinet Committee, 29 October 2014', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2014; Alan Goodman, 'Black Patch', [personal communication to author], 11 February 2016.

²⁹⁹ On the stabilisation works see Sandwell MBC, 'Historic Soho Foundry—Extension of Contract and Legal Agreements: Agenda Item 15: Report to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport, 25 October 2006', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2006. 'Avery Historical Museum closes as hunt is on for new home', *Birmingham Post*, 7 January 2015.

³⁰⁰ 'With regard the future plans for the area, the council are currently looking at ways for regenerating this area, attracting additional investment by disposing of vacant development sites, by improving accessibility into the area and investing in upgrading the environment. The council already has a resolution in place to dispose of land at Kitchener Street to progress a state of the art waste to energy facility. It is also looking at ways of improving the park and accessing appropriate funding to upgrade the roads and footpaths, improve access into the area and working with landowners to develop underused or vacant sites. Development in this area will be for employment/industrial uses, not residential': Hayley Insley, 'Freedom of Information Request: Black Patch, Smethwick/Siebel Enquiry No. 1-711230741 [ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]', [personal communication to author], 26 June 2015.

³⁰¹ This draws on a comment by White: 'One of the reasons why the housing at Black Patch was a sink was because nobody wanted to live there. Why? Because it was so far from all the amenities, from transport and so on; it's not a clever place to be': White, 'Interview'.

Conclusions

This historical review concludes local government bears significant responsibility for the severity and prolongation of neighbourhood collapse in both areas. The need to remove 'slum-housing' resulted in poorly-built council-owned and mismanaged environments that rapidly proved deeply unattractive. Sandwell also inherited localised oversupply; the postwar failure to redevelop Black Patch for industry; and accelerating deindustrialisation. Other councils faced these problems; many did better. The wider political management failings discussed in Chapter 4 framed a local path-dependency: a 'reactive sequence' of piecemeal and expedient activity, with successive lettings practices ('dumping') being a prime example. A further characteristic was the absolving of responsibility through the 'mythscape'. The council institutionally forgot what it had previously done to places, including its mistakes and even its successes, such as Estate Action in Windmill Lane. New community centres and consultancy studies abounded, but not integrated, area-based regeneration, or effective community engagement. Public policy reinforced the market 'sorting-effect' by concentrating those with the least choice; then pathologised as an 'underlying culture of benefit dependency' and criminality. It marked the negative continuity of public landlordism in the most deprived ward in Sandwell, though politically the safest for Labour.³⁰²

³⁰² By 2007, parts of Windmill Lane fell in the one per cent most deprived in England Department for Communities and Local Government, 'The English Indices of Deprivation 2007', [statistical report], London: CLG, 2007. This was also the case in 2010, but no areas in Windmill Lane were in the most deprived one percent by 2015: Department for Communities and Local Government, 'The English Indices of Deprivation 2010', [statistical report], London: CLG, 2010; Department for Communities and Local Government, 'The English Indices of Deprivation 2015', [statistical report], London: CLG, 2015. See maps in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS

Described in the postwar years as ‘probably the most heavily industrialised area in the whole of England’ but also Britain’s ‘colour-bar town’, Smethwick’s vicissitudes invite an assessment of local government stewardship of a place undergoing structural change.¹ Circumstances produced options and choices for local politicians and government bodies in managing Smethwick. The contribution of such choices for the evolution and relative performance of Smethwick from 1945 to the present offers an instructive example of how ‘governance matters’.² The importance of this local dimension is underlined by the effective end of national urban policy in 2010. This concluding chapter identifies how complex, interlocking drivers shaping Smethwick can be understood through three overall themes. These are: structural change and postwar redevelopment; managing decline, and the position of Smethwick in wider Sandwell; and partnerships and community engagement.³ This is followed by a focus on outcomes, with a judgment of how Smethwick may fare in an environment characterised as ‘austerity-localism’. This enables an overall assessment based on the research question for the study. It ends by suggesting how the Smethwick experience is of wider relevance for localised urban policy. Finally, it considers the relevance of the research approach and methodology used and possible areas of further research that might be undertaken.

¹ The first phrase was quoted in Chapter 1 and is from Smethwick Corporation, ‘Smethwick Staffordshire—The Official Industrial Handbook’, [council report], Cheltenham: Ed. J. Burrow, 1959, 54. The second phrase is from ‘Colour Bar Town Gets a Temple’, *Daily Mail*, 31 July 1961.

² The phrase was quoted in Chapter 1 and is from Alan Harding, Iain Deas *et al.*, ‘Reinventing Cities in a Restructuring Region? The rhetoric and reality of renaissance in Liverpool and Manchester’, in Martin Boddy and Michael Parkinson (eds.), *City Matters: Competitiveness, cohesion and urban governance* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2004), 34.

³ See Figure 1.1, Chapter 1.

6.1 Study Theme Conclusions

While places have distinctive circumstances and trajectories, external structural forces are critical drivers. Urbanisation and industrialisation created 'intrinsic' or 'hard-to-change' area characteristics. Smethwick was born from the energy of Birmingham's expanding economic universe, to crystallise as an inner-urban town. Peculiarly wedged between Birmingham and Black Country proper, it grew from a canal-based corridor into an urban structure that by 1945 was both dense and significantly obsolete. Decentralisation of population and economic activity away from metropolitan cores was the prevailing flow in the twentieth-century. Decline for Smethwick was thereby inescapable and painful. Business takeovers from the mid-1960s led to closure or departure, without regard to the impact on place. Smethwick at this point achieved national prominence for the local political reaction to rapid immigration, a long-term structural process in the central areas of major cities, eventually leading to repopulation and 'super-diversity' in some.

First affecting Smethwick in 1966, local government reorganisation was inevitable and universal in England by 1974, but it was still a break-point or 'critical juncture'. Smethwick first passed into Warley and just eight years later into Sandwell, a local authority with no historic identity. Encouraged by the central state, urban local authorities had meanwhile played a central role in postwar slum clearance and redevelopment, using largely-disastrous system-build housing methods to recast residential and tenure patterns in the urban cores, becoming major landlords. This left them uniquely responsible for 'place'—and the mounting problems. The blatant failure by Warley to recognise accelerating population loss in strategic planning policy led to significant overprovision of

poor quality council housing in Smethwick. The 4,900 council-build in the twenty years after 1955 left the overall housing stock little changed (–1 per cent), but by 1975 there were 11 per cent fewer households in Smethwick, so void rates surged.⁴ This policy left a further ‘hard-to-change’ legacy for Sandwell. Just when deindustrialisation created more poverty, the issue arose of how to deal with failing environments previously created to eliminate poverty.

Smethwick lost its political and economic independence in the mid-1960s and the task facing the new Sandwell in 1974 was the management of decline. The early years were marked by a difficult adjustment from previous local authorities, but also complacent management attitudes and persistent underspending on services. System-built estates that were difficult-to-let from the outset were denied investment and badly managed by a weak housing department in a new ‘big urban authority’, although rents were low. Diverting housing account resources to fund general services worsened huge government cuts to housing spending.

The national imposition of an urban development corporation (UDC) in 1987 covering much of Sandwell was decisive in a temporary political rupture that nevertheless triggered a ‘reactive sequence’ of regeneration area-based initiatives (ABIs) by the council. Continued ‘chasing’ of external funds distorted local planning and delivery into ‘pepperpotted’ activity. Nevin concluded: ‘Sandwell started badly on too many fronts and

⁴ As discussed in Chapter 4 and see also Special Note 5: Creating a Population time series for historic Smethwick. On stock levels see Special Note 6: Housing data for Smethwick.

was unable to complete them'.⁵ As local population and national funding increased from 2000, the failure to prioritise and sustain place investment was exposed. A controlling approach nevertheless lacked 'conjoining command'; the stream of area studies (sixty for Smethwick alone) being a visible symptom, while local partnerships were lost.⁶ An eventual commercial focus on West Bromwich Town Centre was bound-up with a wider, hubristic growth strategy for the Black Country. This reactive sequence reflected the national pattern where 'constant change in institutions, policies and governance arrangements was the norm'.⁷ But places such as Salford and Manchester achieved significant outcomes through persistent layering of ABI effort and wider public investment in areas also benefitting from market forces.

The management of decline can be most clearly seen at neighbourhood level. The low demand crisis that engulfed Sandwell began in Windmill Lane, dominated by nationally-discredited housing designs. In the critical 1977–84 period, when intensive estate management was introduced by other local authorities, Windmill Lane saw a non-implemented pilot security patrol, abortive sales of a 'white elephant' multi-storey car park to housing associations for conversion to yet more flats, and the purchase of a bakery for a community centre. As seen, Government frustration with Sandwell led to the attempted imposition of a HAT in 1988–90.

⁵ Brendan Nevin, 'Interviews with Author', 6 August and 24 September 2013, 7 September 2015. Nevin was a researcher and government adviser and previous head of housing strategy in Sandwell.

⁶ The phrase 'conjoining command' was used in Chapter 4 and is from C. Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta 1946–1988* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1989), 5; as quoted in Alan Harding, Stuart Wilks-Heeg, and Mary Hutchins, 'Business, Government and the Business of Urban Governance', *Urban Studies*, 37/5–6 (2000), 975–94, 984.

⁷ This phrase was used in Chapter 4 and is from Stephen Syrett and David North, 'Between Economic Competitiveness and Social Inclusion: New Labour and the economic revival of deprived neighbourhoods', *Local Economy*, 25/5–6 (2010), 476–93, 489.

The alternative Estate Action scheme was successful, but was disregarded within a 'mythscape' of supposed failed regeneration.⁸ Windmill Lane, Sandwell's most deprived neighbourhood; a catalyst for housing market restructuring and dozens of ABIs across Sandwell never gained a suitable ABI to complement the spell of housing investment. Instead, it suffered from insufficient repairs, caretaking and cleaning from housing budgets; and inadequate rubbish collection and grounds maintenance by the council. The backcloth was a stigmatising discourse among stakeholders about 'dependency' and 'problem families'. Continued housing blight and background masterplans meant residents experienced the cognitive dissonance of 'regeneration fatigue' without regeneration.⁹ A recovery was underway by 2015 but Windmill Lane had badly lost ground in comparison with historically problematic estates nationally and West Smethwick/Galton Village locally.

Black Patch was mistakenly retained for housing, in an era of wholesale clearance. Further 1960s flats, a fresh school and sacrosanct allotments used by Birmingham residents perpetuated the housing 'lock-in' amid an industrial area on the north-east boundary. Community pressure forced the removal of grossly-unfit streets. Unlettable flats and a fatal fire led to short-lived stock transfer, piecemeal demolition and progressive loss of local services. The housing stock in Black Patch fell from 417 units in 1967 to 32 units in 2006; these last being mainly-housing association stock built in 1990, when neighbourhood unviability was already plain. Area policy fluctuated into the 2000s, leaving a wasteland of

⁸ The term 'mythscape' was used in Chapter 5 and is from Duncan Bell as cited in David Parker and Christian Karner, 'Remembering the Alum Rock Road: Reputational geographies and spatial biographies', *Midland History*, 36/2 (2011), 292–309, <<http://www.maneyonline.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1179/004772911X13074595849275>>, accessed 15 December 2014, 308.

⁹ A term used in Chapter 2 from Gill Davidson, David McGuinness *et al.*, "'It'll get worse before it gets better" — Local experiences of living in a regeneration area', *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, 7/1 (2013), 55–66, 56.

closed facilities and stymied use, adjacent to decaying world heritage, the Soho Foundry. Housing mismanagement played its part, but the ignominy of Black Patch was more squarely a historic planning failure.

Local government reorganisations rendered historic place identities largely otiose, at the same time as deindustrialisation and housing failure were undermining place function. Although historically a town, Smethwick was portrayed in interviews as now ‘both a place and places’ and alternatively as a ‘collection of places’.¹⁰ In a conundrum expressed by Rhead, Smethwick was ‘too big to be local and too small to be powerful’.¹¹ Smethwick may have been just a ‘geographical expression’, but its councillors retained political significance within the controlling Labour Group.¹² Smethwick meanwhile related socio-spatially to Birmingham, while attracting a contested narrative of being privileged by investment within Sandwell. More fundamentally, the interlocking problems inherited by Sandwell contributed to a culture of crisis-management, where: ‘unless place is the bit that’s in crisis, place is irrelevant’.¹³ In a related view, ‘Smethwick wasn’t in crisis any more by the 2000s and at that point they just didn’t bother’.¹⁴ Yet back in 1989, around perhaps Smethwick’s nadir, separate corporate ‘Smethwick Initiative’ and ‘housing-led regeneration at Black Patch’ approvals were both buried.

¹⁰ Respectively, Gary Bowman, 'Interview with Author', 4 February 2014; David Rhead, 'Interview with Author', 1 October 2013. Bowman was a senior council officer and Windmill Lane resident. Rhead worked at the Black Country Development Corporation and was later Senior Area Manager, Homes and Communities Agency.

¹¹ Rhead, 'Interview'.

¹² Merely a ‘geographical expression’ is popularly attributed to Metternich in describing pre-unification Italy.

¹³ Richard Young, 'Interviews with Author', 31 May 2012, 25 September 2013 and 23 April 2014. Young was a Labour councillor for Bristnall ward in 1991–2004 and Vice Chair of housing, Chair of Finance and Deputy Leader of Sandwell who also lived in Windmill Lane.

¹⁴ Nevin, 'Interviews'.

The backdrop to local partnership and community engagement was the enduring governance culture of 'municipal labourism': the one-party state in Sandwell, with closed internal political arrangements around town-based cliques and a 'paternalistic' outlook, especially as a public landlord, but also in community partnerships. In one view: 'it was about social control and political support'.¹⁵ The housing department, originally in a subordinate position in the local authority, enforced petty rules such as banning fencing of open gardens, while pursuing socially-damaging lettings practices in particular localities. Apparent 'dumping' following evictions, rehousing mentally-ill patients without support, teenage mothers via social services, or asylum-seekers sharpened the 'neighbourhood effect' of living in Windmill Lane and Black Patch. Although attitudes to resident involvement markedly shifted in the 1990s, manipulation of tenant fears of privatisation by a HAT rebounded, when planned stock transfer to secure investment was rejected. The council subsequently passed its housing to an arms-length body and returned it without further ballots. Taking the long-view, while population decline dominated much of the period, the response to immigration was populist and restrictive when housing shortages were acute: in the 1960s (under the Tories) and 2010s (under Labour) with housing allocations explicitly catering to the existing population.

The council assembled an effective 'grant coalition' of Sandwell stakeholders to bid for ABI money.¹⁶ Sandwell had an uneasy, instrumental approach to later delivery vehicles, albeit one common to the Birmingham-Black Country councils. The hierarchical control also exercised over local schemes by government office and the regional development agency

¹⁵ Nevin, 'Interviews'.

¹⁶ The phrase was used in Chapter 4 and is from Allan Cochrane, Jamie Peck, and Adam Tickell, 'Manchester Plays Games: Exploring the local politics of globalisation', *Urban Studies*, 33/8 (1996), 1319–36, 1333.

was unhelpful. The most genuine partnership working was at a local level, particularly in Tipton, Smethwick and Greets Green. SRB4 was a 'bottom-up' groundswell, which transformed a small, people-based scheme into an authentic place-based partnership for Smethwick. Such partnerships were dismantled when funding expired, in the 'politics of local closure'.¹⁷ Symptomatically, the council in 1999 established town committees and supporting town teams as a vehicle for local engagement in Sandwell, but without the linkage to the private and voluntary sectors secured by Smethwick SRB4. These town structures, wholly reliant on external funding, were deemed ineffective and were duly ended in 2009.

6.2 Outcomes to 2015, Prospects for Smethwick and Overall Assessment

The scale of socio-economic and physical change in the study period was dramatic. Deindustrialisation led to an enduring loss of economic function. Between 1951 and 2014, depending on the measure used, between 27,000 and 39,300 jobs were lost in Smethwick, or 57 to 68 per cent.¹⁸ Population fell by 41 per cent in 1951–2001, the fifth largest urban decrease in postwar England.¹⁹ In 2011, almost a third of the population in Smethwick was born outside the UK compared to less than three per cent in 1951. Black and minority ethnic (BME) groups accounted for more than three-fifths of the population in 2011. Increased immigration from 2001 reversed a 70-year population decline, changing Smethwick from a multi-ethnic to a 'super-diverse' area.

¹⁷ The phrase was used in Chapter 4 and is from Paul Chatterton and David Bradley, 'Bringing Britain Together? The limitations of area-based regeneration policies in addressing deprivation', *Local Economy*, 15/2 (2000), 98–111, 104.

¹⁸ See Special Note 10: Employment data for Smethwick.

¹⁹ See Special Note 8: Postwar Population change in English Urban areas.

The critical factor in Smethwick's shrinkage was loss of housing. Some 2,400 system-built council dwellings were demolished after 1988. Taken together with private redevelopment, clearance in Smethwick reached 10,664 homes in an area of four square miles (Table 6.1). The comparable loss of housing in the second half of the twentieth-century and the subsequent reversal in demand in Smethwick and Salford is shown in Figure 6.1. Around 750 mainly-private houses were latterly built on ex-industrial sites at Brindley Village and Cape Hill.²⁰ This land-use and tenure shift was a notable departure from the twentieth-century pattern.²¹ Both sites proved very popular with local BME communities.²² Many of the units at Cape Hill were purchased 'off-plan' as 'buy-to-lets' and particularly attracted East European migrants into a growing private rented sector poised to overtake council renting (Figure 6.2).²³ But ponderous site acquisition at 'Brindley Village II' undertaken by the public bodies through PXP, yet another delivery vehicle, dated back to the late 1990s (Figure 6.3).²⁴ Hoardings erected around the site in 2010 had a 'housing coming soon' message. By early 2016, the cleared and remediated site was due to be marketed for sale, with new-build dependent on a fresh planning application.²⁵

²⁰ Mitchell & Butlers (M&B) brewery, which closed in 2002, was redeveloped with 600 houses in Smethwick and 375 in Birmingham: 'Persimmon to buy Cape Hill brewery for £110m', *Express & Star*, 20 September 2005. The credit crunch halted activity and the development received public funding to resume activity.

²¹ The earlier 156-home development at Brindley Urban Village, the first major private housing scheme north of the canal for almost a century, was on an ex-industrial site dating back to 1790: Smethwick Regeneration Partnership, 'Smethwick Pride—Annual Report 1998/1999', [council report], Smethwick: Sandwell MBC, 1999; G. C. Baugh, M. W. Greenslade, and D. A. Johnson, 'Smethwick', in M. W. Greenslade (ed.), *History of the County of Stafford* (The Victoria History of the Counties of England, XVII; London: University of London, Institute of Historical Research, 1976), 109.

²² Marianne Monro, 'Interview with Author', 21 May 2013. Monro was a community worker who grew-up in Windmill Lane.

²³ Kerry Bolister, 'Interview with Author', 15 October 2013. Bolister was Area Director—Homes and Communities at Sandwell after 2011. An off-plan property is a dwelling purchased before a structure has been constructed or completed. Property investors or property speculators purchase property in this way with the objective of making substantial capital gains. Buy-to-let refers to the purchase of a property specifically to let out, that is to rent it out.

²⁴ Rhead, 'Interview'; John Spellar, 'Meeting with Author', 27 January 2009; John Spellar, 'Brindley 2', [conversation with author], 22 February 2016. Spellar was MP for Warley after 1997.

²⁵ Alan Goodman, 'Brindley 2', [personal communication to author], 11 February 2016.

Table 6.1: Housing Clearance in Smethwick, 1951 to 2011

	Dwellings cleared
Private housing clearance 1951–85, historic Smethwick	6,050
Private housing clearance 1986–2011, historic Smethwick	1,538
Private housing clearance in ex-Birmingham areas 1951–2011	425
Council housing clearance 1988–2011, historic Smethwick	2,387
Temporary municipal housing ('prefabs') removed by c.1974	264
Total clearance in Smethwick area 1951–2011	10,664

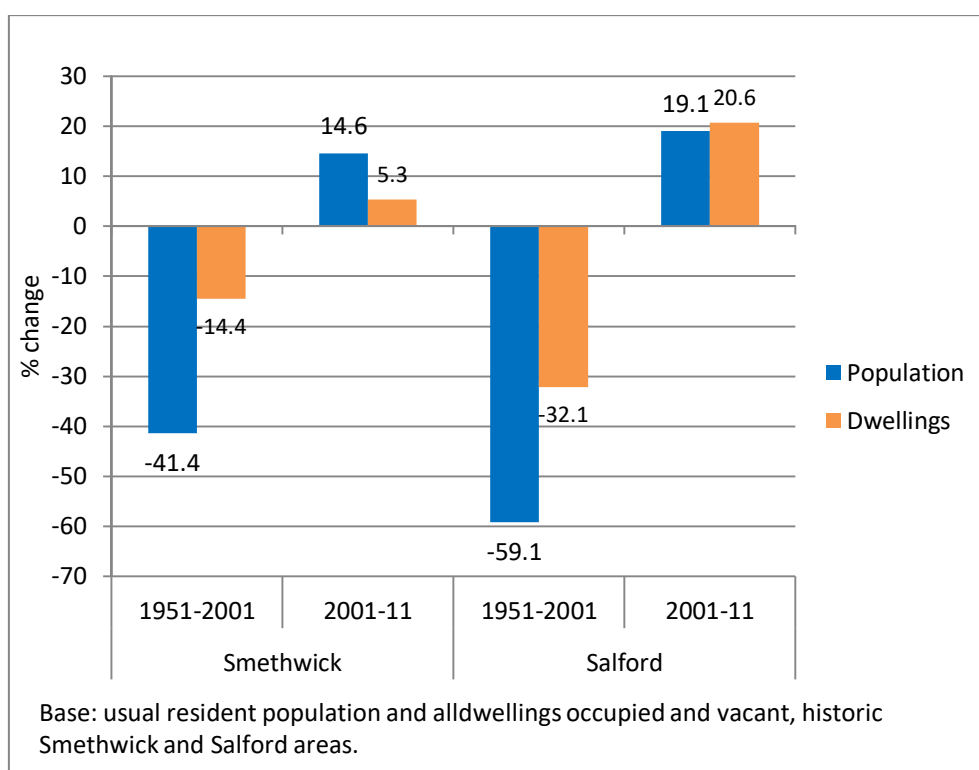
Source: Special Note 25: Scale of Housing Clearance in Smethwick.

Austerity marked both 1945 and 2015, but Smethwick meanwhile shifted from being essentially 'urban Britain' to 'inner-city', in all its complexity. Figure 6.4 characterises land-use and neighbourhood function in Smethwick in 2015 and may be compared with 1945 (Chapter 3). Despite population shrinkage and wider retail industry change, three high street centres endured. Deindustrialisation left a ramshackle factory zone; but with logistics depots benefitting from proximity to M6 Junction 1. Victorian 'by-law' housing largely remained, passing back to private rented. It was increasingly BME, in places delineated by specific ethnic groups, but mainly in mixed areas. Replacement of the old 'slums' and backstreet factories with social housing was transformational, as was the tenorial shift in otherwise undisturbed western Smethwick, through sale of council stock. The artisan Bearwood of 1945 functionally merged with the Smethwick terraced core by 2015, but with a gentrified 'park-edge' linked to Birmingham.²⁶ Evident was the near-disappearance of Black Patch as neighbourhood, but also new family housing on brownfield sites: a continuing process to 2018 and beyond.²⁷

²⁶ Young, 'Interviews'; Alun Severn, 'Interview with Author', 29 January 2013. Severn was a social enterprise consultant and writer on race relations who grew up in Marshall Street, Smethwick.

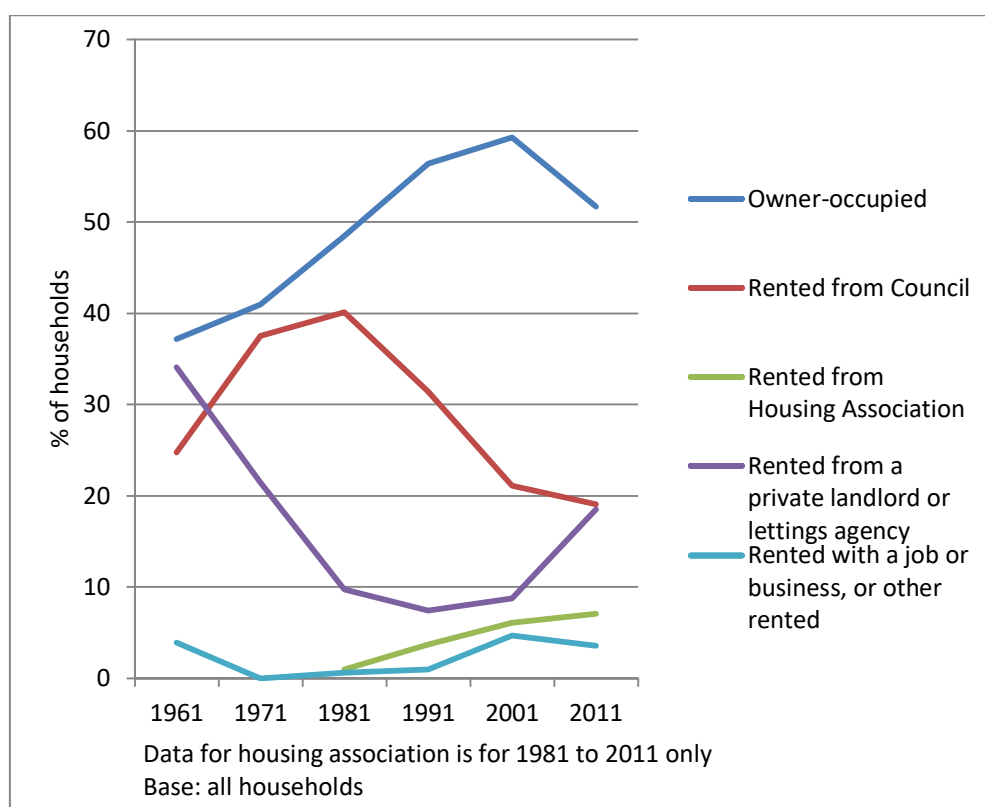
²⁷ As well as Brindley Village II (193 units), the pipeline also includes a 142-home development at Cranford Street: 'Smethwick housing estate plan now moving forward', *Express & Star*, 24 February 2015.

Figure 6.1: Population and Housing change, historic Smethwick and Salford, 1951 to 2011



Source: Special Note 5: Creating a Population time series for historic Smethwick; Special Note 6: Housing data for Smethwick; Special Note 7: Comparative data for historic Salford.

Figure 6.2: Housing Tenure in Smethwick, 1961 to 2011



Source: Special Note 6: Housing data for Smethwick.

Smethwick in 2015 appeared at a crossroads. In Josan's view, 'With so many drivers Smethwick could tip one way or the other, depending on the economic circumstances'.²⁸ Reduced property vacancies due to international migration and moves from Birmingham, falling population turnover and rising neighbourhood satisfaction indicated stability in Smethwick not seen for decades. It was an increasingly residential, even dormitory area.²⁹ Victoria Park, which hosted the postwar Whitson Gymkhana, was now described as a 'fixing-point for newcomers and a place of cultural interaction'.³⁰ The annual Vaisakhi parade to Handsworth started on Smethwick High Street, where the Olympic Torch was also greeted in 2012 (Figure 6.5 and Figure 6.6). Smethwick enjoyed a well-developed, BME-led third sector, benefitting from past funding through the SRB4 regeneration scheme; the research suggesting the social capital and community interaction necessary for community cohesion was fostered by SRB4. Even so, community relations in Smethwick, as elsewhere, remained dynamic, delicate, and a significant governance issue.

Yet Smethwick had not recovered from deindustrialisation and the polarising impact of population decentralisation. Fresh inflow was mainly of low-income households, 'topping-up' poverty. Mapping of deprivation indices showed further relative decline during the 2000s in Smethwick, albeit some recovery by 2015 (Figure 6.7). Housing remained a

²⁸ Gurinder Singh Josan, 'Interview with Author', 3 July 2013. Josan was a Sandwell Labour councillor for St Pauls ward in Smethwick from 2002–10.

²⁹ Nick Bubalo, 'Interview with Author', 14 October 2013; Bolister, 'Interview'. Bubalo was a planner with Sandwell since 1985 and since 2011 Area Director—Regeneration and Economy, with responsibility for Smethwick and West Bromwich.

³⁰ Postwar gymkhana (an equestrian day event): Trevor Harris, 'Interview with Author', 10 September 2013; John Maddison, *Smethwick in Old Photographs* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1989), 160. On contemporary Victoria Park, the quote is from Bowman, 'Interview'. The extensive community engagement in the park investment was described by Aynols Reid, 'Interview with Author', 13 February 2014. Trevor Harris was a retired Smethwick Headteacher who grew up in Smethwick. Bowman was a senior council officer and Windmill Lane resident. Reid was a Windmill Lane resident active in 'Friends and Neighbours' and a former chair of Cape Hill and Windmill Area Sure Start.

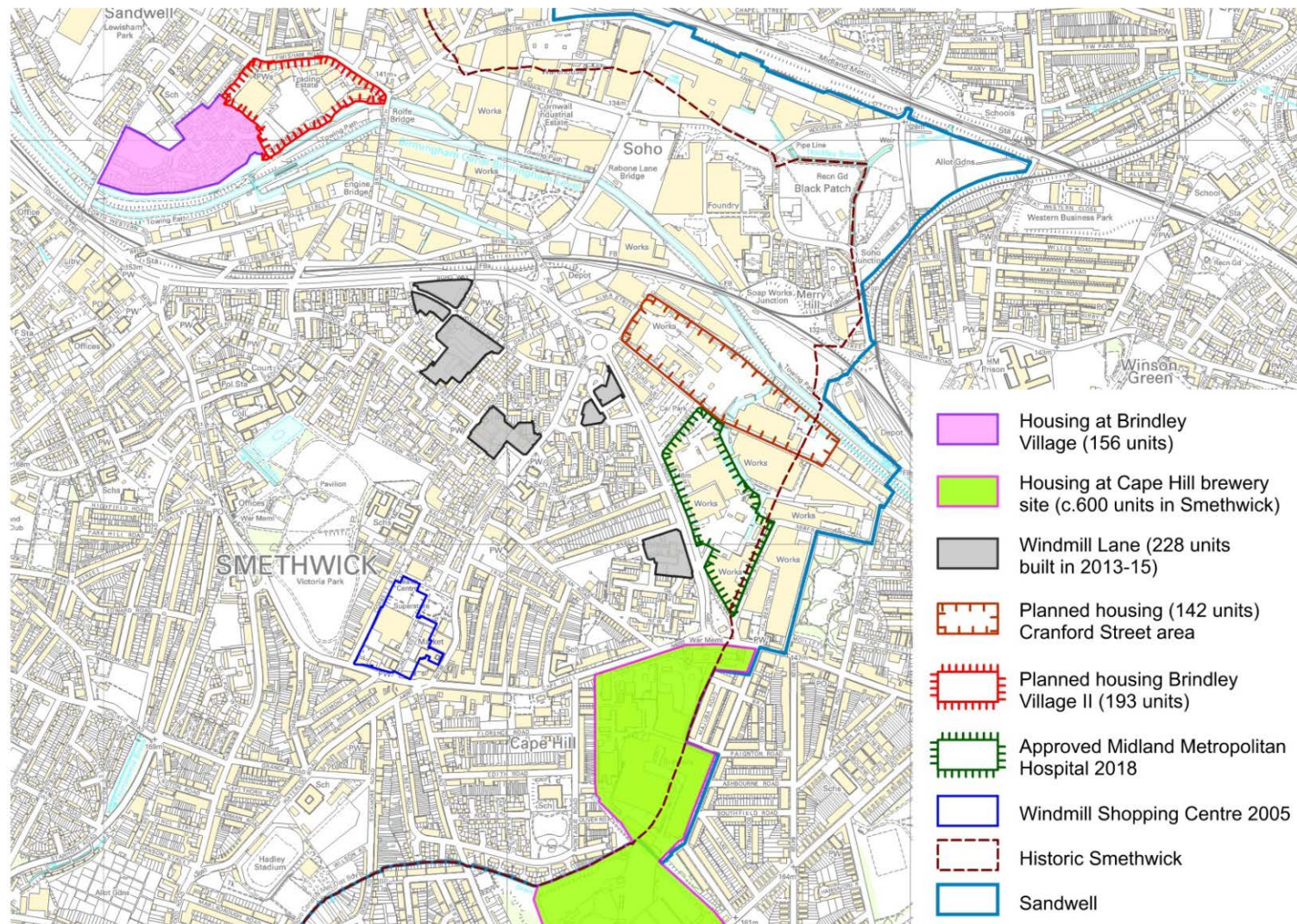
dynamic factor. The end of funded refurbishment schemes will see condition decline in pre-1919 and increasingly, the interwar private housing stock.³¹ The quality and image of council housing was transformed, but viability will be adversely affected by government policy promoting sales and disposal.³² Economically, Smethwick retained successful manufacturing firms, but high dependence on public sector employment and limited long-term jobs growth in Birmingham represented a further risk. The approval of the £353m Midland Metropolitan Hospital in 2014 after a decade of delay should see construction complete by 2018, with major economic benefits (Figure 6.3).³³

³¹ Steve Lodder, 'Interview with Author', 25 June 2013. Lodder worked in Sandwell housing department from 1973–2007 and was Area and then District Housing Manager for Smethwick in 1980–98.

³² 'Social housing: Future, what future?', *Shelter Policy Blog* [blog], <<http://blog.shelter.org.uk/2015/10/social-housing-future-what-future/>>, accessed 29 January 2016; 'Social housing "faces slow death" with 88,000 homes forecast to be lost by end of decade', *Independent*, 29 January 2016. See Special Note 3: Austerity and Local Government.

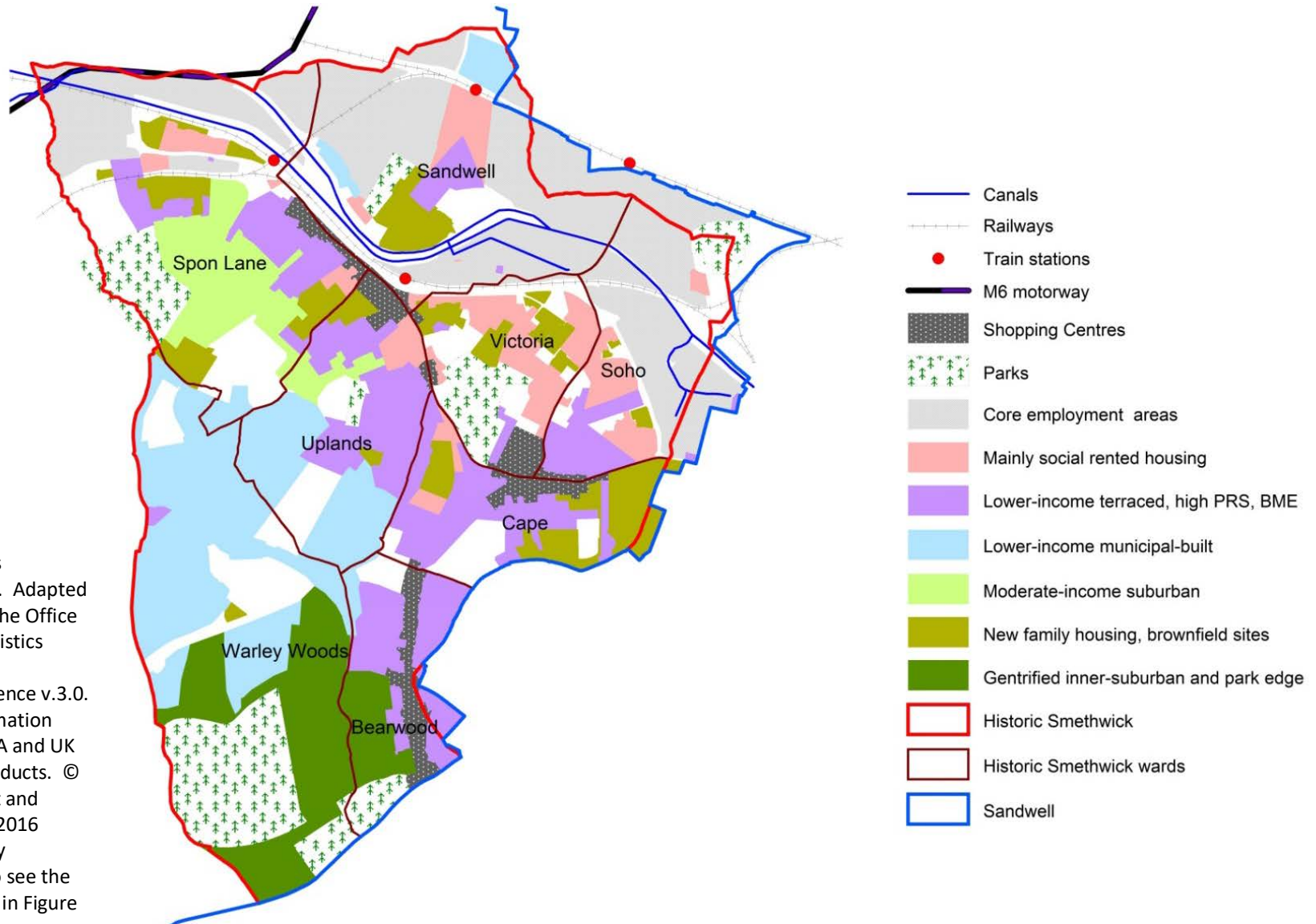
³³ '£350 million super hospital for Smethwick announced on Black Country Day', *Express & Star*, 14 July 2014; 'New £353m hospital will mean boost for economy', *Birmingham Post*, 19 July 2014.

Figure 6.3: Strategic Land-use change in Smethwick, 2001 to c.2018



Source: Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A UK Data Service product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

Figure 6.4: Urban Form and Neighbourhood Function—Smethwick in 2015



Source: Author's characterisation. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. Landmark Information Group Ltd/EDINA and UK Data Service products. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153. Also see the 1945 equivalent in Figure 3.7, Chapter 3.

Despite increasing central direction after 1979, councils retained capacity to drive multiple agendas. But 2010 represented a breakpoint in the conduct of the state, expressed in the formula of ‘austerity-localism’. This implied that ongoing funding cuts will ‘marginalise’ as well as ‘responsibilise’ councils, undermining their ability to lead and manage areas undergoing complex change.³⁴ For the first time since it gained national Urban Programme funding in 1968, Smethwick received no regeneration funding.³⁵ Enduring governance cultures of ‘municipal labourism’ and ‘public landlordism’ had been modified by partnership-working. These were sometimes instrumental, unstable constructs; other times a ‘site’ for service innovation and democratic participation, particularly at neighbourhood level. However, ‘centralised-localism’ after 2010 risked privileging the (depleted) local authority at the expense of varied stakeholder networks seen as a hallmark of Smethwick, and vital to local renewal and growth.³⁶ Meanwhile a long-term and unhealthy decline of electoral competition left Labour with 69 of 72 councillors in Sandwell by 2015 and mired in a political corruption scandal.

³⁴ As quoted in Chapter 2, Hastings *et al* argued local government ‘becomes both more marginalised and, paradoxically, responsibilised’: Annette Hastings, Nick Bailey *et al.*, ‘Coping with the Cuts? The management of the worst financial settlement in living memory’, *Local Government Studies*, 41/4 (2015), 601–21, 618.

³⁵ Smethwick first received Urban Programme funding in 1968, which marked the onset of national urban policy attention on Smethwick. It supported youth and community facilities and English language support: Also see John Murden, ‘A History of Warley Education Service’, [research study], Great Wyrley: John Murden, 2011, 35–6.

³⁶ The term ‘centralised-localism’ was discussed in Chapter 2 and is from Kevin Broughton, Nigel Berkeley, and David Jarvis, ‘Where Next for Neighbourhood Regeneration in England?’, *Local Economy*, 26/2 (2011), 82–94, 88.

The effectiveness of the stewardship of the local authorities responsible for managing Smethwick was the central research focus. This was addressed in three stages. Firstly, it analysed the structural economic and social drivers shaping Smethwick as an urban area. Secondly, it assessed the influence of national urban-related policy and central-local relations on Smethwick. Together, these 'givens' defined the externally-driven environment.³⁷ Thirdly, it examined the local dimension through the record of local housing and regeneration activity, with particular regard to the Windmill Lane and Black Patch areas of Smethwick. What assessment should then be made—might Smethwick have fared better?

Sandwell as a new local authority in 1974 inherited the local 'system-impact' of a declining economy, population residualisation, system-built housing and a failing urban form. It was also affected by national fiscal, employment, housing and other national policies and programmes. The trend from the 1970s was centralisation, demunicipalisation and disinvestment although councils retained local capacity to act. As noted, two phases of disruptive local government reorganisation affected Smethwick, but all such drivers adversely affected much of urban local government. Sandwell was one of only a handful of authorities targeted for both a UDC and a HAT, but in all cases an imposed HAT was thwarted locally. In this sense, the Smethwick experience was not unique.

³⁷ The 'givens' is a term used in several places in the thesis, derived from Nevin's comment on structural and national policy influences: 'These drivers were given to local councillors, they didn't write them': Nevin, 'Interviews'. Nevin was a researcher and government adviser and previous head of housing strategy in Sandwell.

Figure 6.5: Vaisakhi Parade along Smethwick High Street, 2013



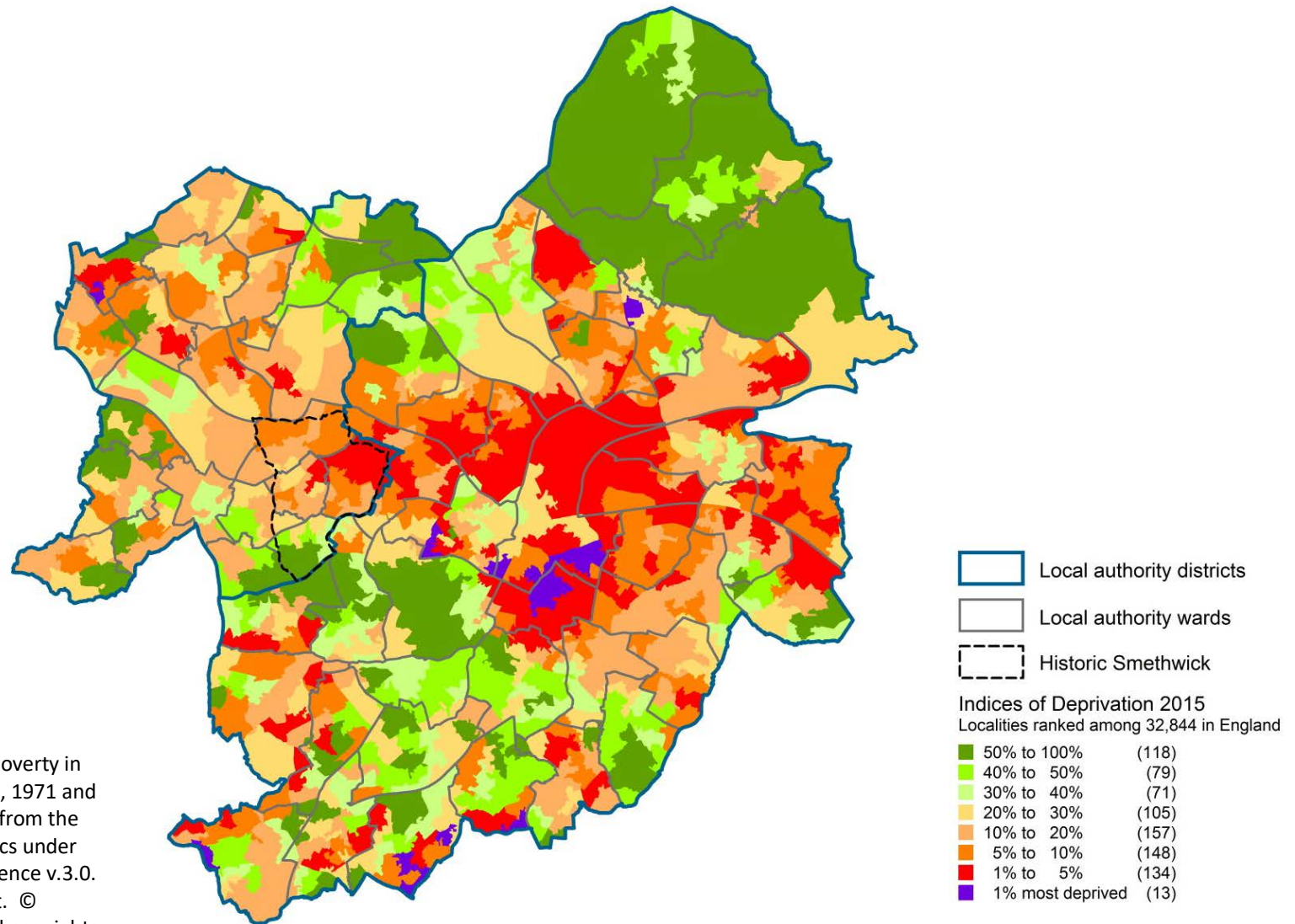
Source: Adam Carey, 'Vaisakhi Parade along Smethwick High Street', 28 April 2013. © Adam Carey.

Figure 6.6: Olympic Torch parade along Smethwick High Street, 2012



Source: Adam Carey, Carey, Adam, 'Olympic Torch Parade along Smethwick High Street', 30 June 2012. © Adam Carey.

Figure 6.7: Deprivation in Birmingham and Sandwell, 2015



Source: Special Note 15: Poverty in Sandwell and Birmingham, 1971 and 1991. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A UK Data Service product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

In examining local stewardship, it is appreciated that governance tends towards ‘messy solutions’, unintended consequences and failure, given limited knowledge, conflicting pressures, restricted resources and environmental complexity. This reality confronted very committed politicians and officers in these decades. ‘Hindsight is wonderful’ remarked Dutton.³⁸ To the historian, it can be a pitfall: it is necessary to understand the past in its own setting, terms, values and priorities.³⁹ This in turn invites consideration of what Malpass called ‘suppressed historical alternatives’ – the possible ‘what-ifs’ and counterfactual scenarios.⁴⁰ Yet, as Davis put it: ‘This is the value of historical study, or seeing it at a distance; to see the trend, to now understand what was happening. We were so close that we didn’t see it at the time’.⁴¹ It should be stressed that neither did the author, also a councillor. Yet the starkness of the failure must limit such exculpatory considerations.

The local dimension of planning, public service delivery, and the leadership and management of place, emerge from this historical review as decisive influences. Such that Chapter 4 identifies, respectively: a paternalistic culture, political expediency and reactive

³⁸ Clive Dutton, ‘Interview with Author’, 30 August 2013. Dutton worked at BCDC, headed Tipton City Challenge and was Sandwell Head of Regeneration and later Director of Planning and Regeneration at Birmingham.

³⁹ John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, methods and new directions in the study of modern history* (5th edn.; London: Routledge, 2013), 7. The point was made in an interview, when judging ‘common sense’ attitudes to race in the 1960s: ‘The notion that you can use the lens of the present to view the past is clearly wrong. People are bound by the social mores, public attitudes and language that prevail at the time’: Severn, ‘Interview’. Severn was a social enterprise consultant and writer on race relations who grew up in Marshall Street, Smethwick.

⁴⁰ Peter Malpass, ‘Path Dependence and the Measurement of Change in Housing Policy’, *Housing, Theory & Society*, 28/4 (2011), 305–19, 317. Some counterfactual scenarios are considered in Special Note 45: ‘Suppressed historical alternatives’ affecting Smethwick.

⁴¹ Philip Davis, ‘Interview with Author’, 28 June 2013. Davis grew up in Black Patch as the son of Soho Labour councillor Ron Davis and was very active in the Labour Party in the Warley Council era. Taylor similarly recalled: ‘Decline – it never occurred to me. When you’re contemporary to it, you don’t realise it’: Geoff Taylor, ‘Interview with Author’, 12 July 2013. Taylor was a Sandwell Labour councillor and past chair of Warley East Labour Party.

policy, the system-build housing 'lock-in', crisis management, spatial incoherence and partnership mistrust. Local government furthermore bears significant responsibility for the severity and prolongation of neighbourhood collapse in Windmill Lane and Black Patch. While not comparable with the monumental strategic failure of Liverpool, it was failure nonetheless.

In 1981, a Windmill Lane tenants' association chair, while acknowledging help from individuals, mused that 'somewhere in the council something is lacking'.⁴² This review suggests it was a persistent, corporate inability to take strategic place decisions, manage conditions on the ground with residents, and to 'stay the course'. It did not meet the standard proposed in Chapter 1, of local government harnessing its mainstream services and regulatory functions; position as a public landlord and landowner; and in community and stakeholder relationships support places in the long-term. Power and Mumford stressed the ground-level importance of 'constantly checking, supervising, mending, clearing, guarding, controlling, linking, and listening'.⁴³ Moreover: 'Management only works over small areas, yet a coordinated effort over large areas is essential. Getting this combination of highly-localised inputs and broader city strategies to work together is highly elusive'.⁴⁴ The conclusion must be that Sandwell and its predecessors managed neither.

⁴² 'Horror storeys—Estate riddled with problems', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 11 May 1981.

⁴³ Anne Power and Katharine Mumford, 'The Slow Death of Great Cities? Urban Abandonment or Urban Renaissance', [academic study], York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1999, 75.

⁴⁴ Power and Mumford, 'Slow Death of Great Cities', 79-80.

In one assessment of this period, it was 'a systemic problem around governance'.⁴⁵ 'A whole series of managerial mistakes' was another characterisation.⁴⁶ While this can be traced to the controlling political culture of municipal labourism, this is not sufficient to explain its long-term operation. The study has highlighted apparent path-dependencies: local 'stickiness' of inherited institutional arrangements and policy preferences, ways of thinking and cultural norms and changing local freedom to act. So faction-based, elite dominance of the controlling Labour group was a 'self-reinforcing' arrangement. The period is also one of 'punctuated-equilibrium', or periods of prolonged stability (or inertia) separated by 'critical junctures' of short and intense episodes of change. The most obvious example was local government reorganisation in 1966/74. Another was the 1987–92 period, a 'conjuncture' which combined internal political crisis with direct government intervention in Sandwell. This generated the 'reactive sequence' of ABIs and the response to low demand housing. These in turn exemplified the historic pattern of piecemeal, expedient or crisis-driven behaviour. The national advent of austerity-localism in 2010 may prove just as decisive a juncture in cementing 'centralised localism' in Sandwell.

⁴⁵ Nevin, 'Interviews'.

⁴⁶ Lodder, 'Interview'.

6.3 Contribution to Knowledge and Research Applicability

If 2010 is indeed so important a watershed, what are the policy implications from this retrospective on a past world? Uneven urban growth; widening cultural diversity and identity; ageing populations and intergenerational disparity; economic risk and social dislocation; infrastructure costs and environmental sustainability all pose major challenges for local authorities.⁴⁷ With budgets cut by two-fifths and by 2020, wholly dependent on the happenstance of local tax bases, for most it will be managed decline. But as the basis for attachment, interaction and lived experience, place will still matter.

The local authority doing its job properly across its district is a necessary, but not sufficient condition. It implies more than providing services at the right scale, to the right customer segments. Leadership and management of place is a necessity, not a luxury under austerity localism, yet highly successful neighbourhood management in Birmingham and elsewhere was immediately cut in 2010.⁴⁸ Places, however defined, do not always need more intervention: a 'site' for something done in, or to a 'problem area', through an area-based initiative. Managing place should not be equated with regeneration, especially only externally-funded activity. Regeneration should be integrated with housing and with services. Managing place is more than addressing crime and nuisance, or ensuring an orderly public realm. More than any programme, or council structure, it is also a way of thinking. We need to understand places, dynamically and historically; so institutions remember pledges given, mistakes made and successes achieved. Long-term future

⁴⁷ Enid Slack and André Côté, 'Comparative Urban Governance', [government report], *Foresight Future of Cities Working Paper*, London: Government Office for Science, 2015, 35-40.

⁴⁸ See Birmingham City Council, 'Laying the Foundations of Localism: 18 months of neighbourhood management in Birmingham priority neighbourhoods, 2009–2011', [council report], Birmingham: Birmingham City Council, 2011.

scenarios must be actively considered (city foresighting).⁴⁹ This needs neighbourhood intelligence, but not 'paralysis-by-analysis'.⁵⁰ At its most basic, it avoids pathologising areas, the fate of Windmill Lane.

The local authority is not merely 'holding-the-ring' for places and their complex relations and interests. It is the long-term leader, as shown by the ever-present expectation people have of their council's capacity to act, and drive multiple agendas.⁵¹ Other public bodies, such as housing associations, are also responsible for place, singly and jointly. But partnership is critical for communities, with engagement a democratic right. A one-party state like Sandwell also needs scrutiny, and healthy challenge. Local partnerships can be seen as a casualty of ABIs ending, but illustrate the luxury-or-necessity argument. The author was a senior councillor, as chair of Sandwell's budgetary committee and lived in Bearwood, in the ward he represented. But he was hampered by limited neighbourhood data and found it unduly difficult to influence council capital programmes, service spending or behaviour, or what other agencies did in Bearwood.⁵² As an elected community leader, he envied the positive-sum environment that partnerships such as Tipton and Wolverhampton City Challenge were demonstrating by the 1990s; the potential for

⁴⁹ On city foresighting see Government Office for Science, 'Future of Cities: Foresight for Cities—A resource for policy-makers', [government report], *Foresight Future of Cities Working Paper*, London: Government Office for Science, 2016.

⁵⁰ An expression used by Garrett and discussed in Chapter 4: John Garrett, 'Interview with Author', 24 June 2013. Garrett was a social worker in Smethwick in the 1980s and later Deputy Chief Executive of Sandwell MBC.

⁵¹ Chris Khamis, 'Interviews with Author', 6 November 2013, 4 February 2014 and 3 March 2016. Khamis was a fellow director of CSR Partnership with the author who particularly worked with the Smethwick Regeneration Partnership.

⁵² See 'Councillor blasts Brum over 'filth'', *Birmingham Evening Mail*, 14 October 1991; 'A 'raw deal' for Bearwood', *Sandwell Chronicle*, 18 October 1991; 'Bearwood is to get better deal', *Sandwell Chronicle*, 20 December 1991.

collective action as ‘co-production’.⁵³ Thus both governance and place matter, their relationship imprecise; but together, the stewardship of place, is critical and the cornerstone of this thesis.

This research originated in the author’s belief that Smethwick is a significant and surprising place (Figure 6.8).⁵⁴ Allen hoped in 1946 that we ‘will see Smethwick not simply as congeries of ugly smoke-grimed little houses, chimney-stacks and houses, but also the place that made the steam engine and all that it implies possible’.⁵⁵ It was described in 1959 as ‘a pillar of postwar England’, but the 1964 election and Marshall Street controversy meant ‘Smethwick’s name would stink in the nostrils of the world’.⁵⁶ Industrial prowess and racial notoriety thereby ensure Smethwick’s historical significance.⁵⁷ This study contributes to its historiography by tracing its economic decline and loss of basis. Deindustrialisation in Smethwick was extreme, yet the overall process illustrated does not provide wider explanatory insight. Smethwick spanned the duration of explicit urban policy from 1968 to 2010, but other places were ‘policy-on’ throughout.⁵⁸ The study argues the

⁵³ See Chapters 1 and 4, but is defined by Boyle and Harris: ‘Co-production means delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours. Where activities are coproduced in this way, both services and neighbourhoods become far more effective agents of change’: New Economics Foundation, ‘In This Together—Building knowledge about co-production’, [opinion piece], London: New Economics Foundation, 2011, 2.

⁵⁴ For a discussion of Figure 6.8 see Special Note 46: Smethwick as a ‘significant and surprising place’.

⁵⁵ Walter Allen, *The Black Country*, ed. Clough Williams-Ellis (London: Paul Elek, 1946), 46.

⁵⁶ Smethwick Corporation, ‘Industrial Handbook (1959 edn.)’, 1. The second expression was by Richard Crossman, Minister for Housing and Local Government speaking in February 1965; quoted in Dhani R. Prem, *The Parliamentary Leper: A history of colour prejudice in Britain* (Aligarh: Metric, 1965), 148.

⁵⁷ The articles and television programmes produced in 2014–15 for the fiftieth anniversaries of the Smethwick parliamentary election and Marshall Street episodes show their continued echo in UK politics, albeit somewhat ahistorically (Chapter 3).

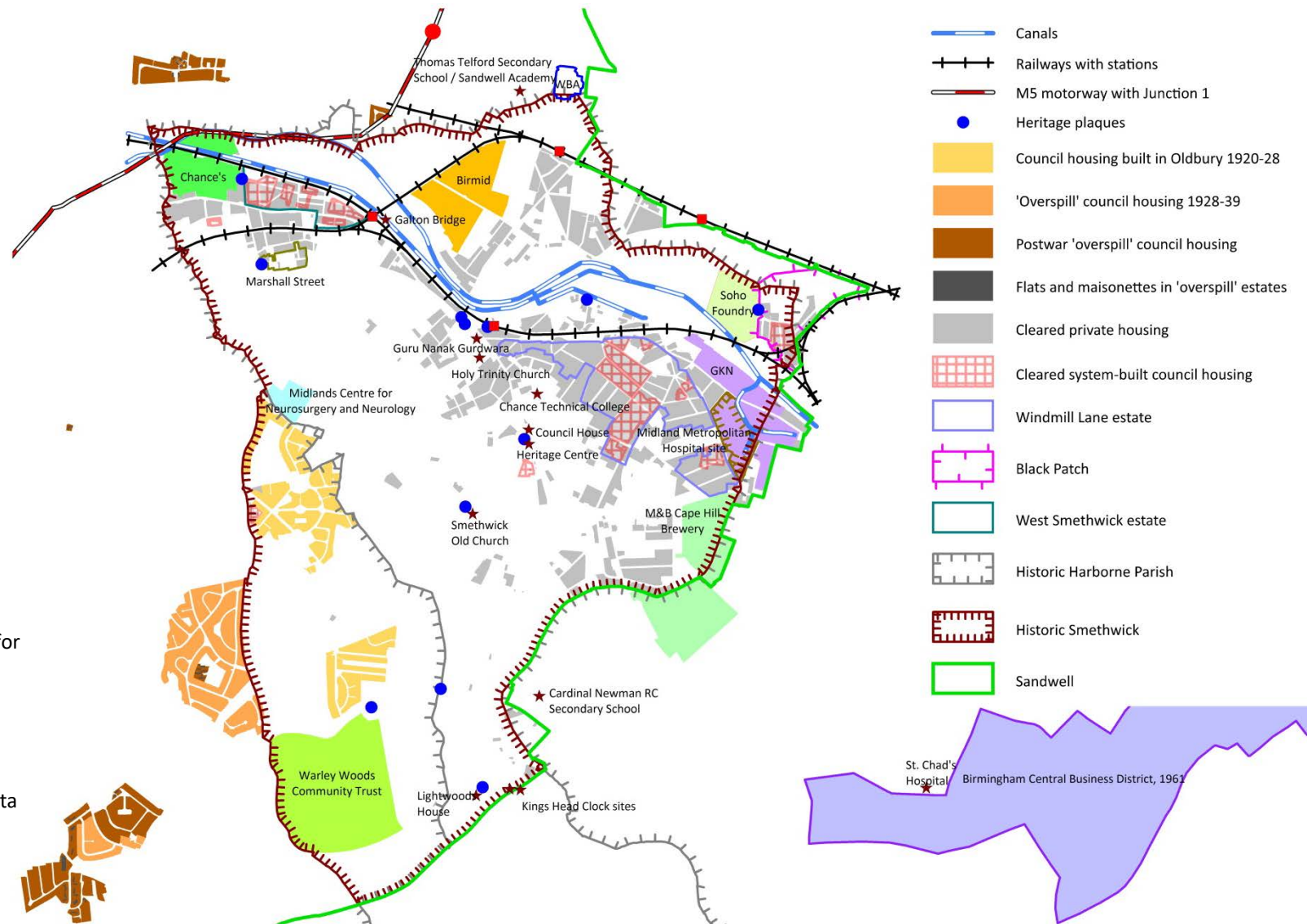
⁵⁸ ‘Policy-on’ is a term used in impact evaluation, and is contrasted with a ‘policy off’ environment in the absence of a particular programme or initiative to establish its additionality or net benefit. Also See Peter Tyler, Colin Warnock *et al.*, ‘Valuing the Benefits of Urban Regeneration’, *Urban Studies*, 50/1 (2013), 169–90: 173.

contemporary distinctiveness and relevance of Smethwick lies in the local dimension of governance.

It is not enough to assert the ‘uniqueness of how things happen in a local area’.⁵⁹ Particularised geo-historical conditions need to be demonstrated; yet localised temporal accounts appear notable by their absence. Housing and regeneration studies tend to be separate or combined only in single-estate studies related to one phase of public intervention. The overall role of local government in ‘place’; especially across different, related places in its jurisdiction seems particularly neglected. This study contributes to this field, by identifying Smethwick as essentially a negative example of local stewardship. The operating factors in this governance failure may be exhibited elsewhere. But Smethwick may be relevant in offering an account of path-dependent, structural and governance ‘critical junctures’ and their long-term legacies. The research is thus a contribution to Smethwick’s historiography and has wider academic and policy relevance.

⁵⁹ Brian Robson, *Those Inner Cities: Reconciling the economic and social aims of urban policy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), ix.

Figure 6.8: Smethwick: 'A Significant and Surprising Place'



The research approach is highly transferable. The methodology combined quantitative and qualitative elements, with oral histories and historical GIS particular features. A particular urgency is emphasised though: local government cuts and restructuring are hastening the departure of critical actors and disposal of vital data. The approach is most obviously relevant to inner-urban and/or ex-industrial areas. Its application to Salford, neglected compared to its much-lauded Manchester neighbour; or parts of the Black Country are obvious starting-points. Examining the operation of path-dependency in urban governance in light of the Smethwick experience is a potential area. Additional Smethwick research might focus on the early postwar period: 'freestanding Smethwick'; or the major BME contribution to Smethwick's economic, cultural and civic vitality. Lastly, difficult to transfer as such, but believed to be highly worthwhile, is a participant-observer perspective. This is 'double-edged', requiring considerable reflexivity in reaching the assessment this concluding chapter represents, yet any deficiency will still be more apparent to a reader than the author. But this was the whole point of course: to find personal explanation for 25 years of political and professional life and convey the continued significance of Smethwick to those who value wider urban life; its triumphs, contradictions and the struggle its travails demand.

APPENDIX I SMETHWICK CHRONOLOGY

1086	Smethwick appears as 'Smedeuuich' in Domesday Book
1670	Harborne Parish Lands Charity in existence
1732	Smethwick Old Church built, St. Peter's Harborne previously sole church
1734	Charity school established
1760	Birmingham–Dudley Road (modern A457) turnpiked
1769	Brindley's Old Main Line canal opened
1795	Landscape architect Humphry Repton produces design for Warley Woods
1796	Soho Foundry opened by Boulton and Watt
1829	Telford's New Main Line canal including Galton Bridge opened
1832	Recruitment by Chance Brothers of French and Belgian workers
1832	Poor Law Act: Smethwick part of Kings Norton Union
1839	Start of paint manufacturer H. S. Richards (still in King Street in 2015)
1845	Chances schools established at Spon Lane
1852	Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Dudley railway opened
1853	Cholera outbreak
1856	Collapse of Fox Henderson, instrumental in the construction of the Crystal Palace
1856	Smethwick split from Harborne, establishment of elected board of health
1859	Bylaw prohibition of further back-to-back housing
1874	Opening of Harborne to Birmingham railway, stimulating development of Bearwood
1876	Birmingham–Dudley Road disturnpiked
1877	Smethwick part of new Tame and Rea Drainage Board
1881	Gasworks built in Rabone Lane
1884	Infections hospital at Holly Lane opened
1888	Smethwick Board decide not to seek incorporation into Birmingham
1890	North-south link severed at Brasshouse Lane when Rolfe Street station rebuilt
1894	Smethwick gains first local authority with formation of district council
1895	Sewer system completed in Smethwick
1895	Soho Foundry acquired by W. & T. Avery Ltd (weighing machines)
1896	Smethwick School Board established from Harborne Board 1873–91
1899	Smethwick incorporated as a municipal borough
1904	First gypsy eviction from Black Patch
1905	Window-maker Henry Hope & Sons relocate from Birmingham
1907	Smethwick elevated to county borough
1908	J. A. Phillips acquire Credenda works for cycle production
1918	Smethwick parliamentary constituency created
1920	Birmal join Midcyl at Dartmouth Road (Birmid)
1920	Unsuccessful attempt by Smethwick Corporation to annexe Oldbury
1920	First council housing built
1927	Mitchell alms-houses built in Coopers Lane

1928	578 acres transferred from Oldbury to Smethwick
1931	Population high of 84,406
1932	Town planning conducted jointly with Oldbury and West Bromwich
1933	Dartmouth Auto Castings established (Birmid)
1933	First slum clearance undertaken in Smethwick
1939	4,759 municipal homes (1,178 situated in Oldbury)
1935	St Chad's general hospital opened, located in Birmingham
1942	Birmid first recruit immigration labour from the Punjab
1945	Labour capture council and parliamentary seat from Conservatives
1945	Abortive amalgamation discussions between Smethwick and West Bromwich
1948	St Chad's Hospital taken over by NHS
1948	Smethwick and West Bromwich fire brigades combined until 1966
1949	Midland Red becomes 50 per cent state-owned when railways nationalised
1949	Corporation's gas undertaking passes to Gas Board with nationalisation
1950	Unemployment at postwar low
1951	Peak workplace employment in Smethwick
1954	Redevelopment of Windmill Lane commenced
1954	Midland Centre for Neurosurgery opened at former smallpox hospital
1955	Peter Griffiths first elected as Conservative councillor for Cape ward
1955	Chance Brothers acquired by Pilkington
1955	Smethwick Development Plan adopted
1955	Colour bar introduced at Red Cow pub
1956	Completion of ten-storey Boulton and Murdock Place, Windmill Lane
1957	Aga Heat transfers stove production to Telford
1957	Sandwell secondary modern schools (later renamed Thomas Telford) opened
1958	Local Government Commission established
1959	Smethwick part-fund new Cardinal Newman RC secondary school in Birmingham
1960	Ten-year residential qualification for council housing introduced
1961	Rent strike in Price Street against rehousing of Pakistani family
1961	Guru Nanak Gurdwara opened, the first in the UK
1962	Last Smethwick overspill housing development at Kingsway, Oldbury
1962	Saddle maker Brooks moves to Downing Street from Birmingham (still operating in 2015)
1963	Closure of Birmingham Carriage & Wagon after 99 years operation
1963	GKN acquires Smethwick Drop Forgings
1964	Completion of Windmill Precinct
1964	Conservatives gain control of Smethwick Council and Smethwick parliamentary seat
1964	Colour bar at Smethwick Labour Club condemned by Harold Wilson
1965	Hope's merge with Crittall to form Crittall-Hope
1965	Marshall Street furore and visit of Malcolm X
1966	Smethwick reorganised into new Warley Council
1966	Black Patch boundary aligned to railways when local government reorganised
1966	Labour regain Smethwick parliamentary seat from Conservatives

1967	Conservatives take control of Warley Council until 1972
1967	Mitchell & Butlers acquired by Bass Charrington
1967	Birmid Group merge with Qualcast
1968	Midland Red fully nationalised as part of National Bus Company
1968	Advent of national regeneration funding through new Urban Programme
1968	Crittall-Hope taken over by Slater Walker, 700 jobs cut
1968	Chance Technical and Oldbury colleges merge as Warley College of Technology
1969	Tangyes relocated to Birmingham following takeover in 1966
1969	Merry Hill Infant School opened in Black Patch Park
1970	24-storey Hamilton and Aiken House, the tallest and last tower blocks opened
1970	Completion of West Smethwick estate
1970	Construction of M5 motorway over Spon Lane
1971	Birmid first company referred to Commission for Industrial Relations
1971	Relocation of George Burn (tubes), Rabone Lane to Shirley
1973	Closure of Midland Red Bearwood headquarters and garage
1973	Death of Ernie Lowry OBE, aged 54, Smethwick Labour Party leader
1974	Warley and West Bromwich combined as Sandwell Metropolitan Borough
1974	Smethwick parliamentary seat incorporated into new Warley East constituency
1974	Warley Structure Plan approved
1974	Introduction of comprehensive education system in Warley
1976	Chance's rolled plate division ceases production
1977	Roslyn Close private scheme completed by Sandwell MBC in Windmill Lane
1977	Closure of Corbett Street bakery (formerly Scribbans) by J Lyons
1978	Hadley Group moves from Birmingham to Smethwick
1978	Conservatives gain control of Sandwell for one year
1979	Avery acquired by GEC in hostile takeover
1980	Mosque opened in Mafeking Road, North Smethwick
1980	Closure of Smethwick Drop Forgings with loss of 400 jobs
1980	Evered sold to Abdullah Bros. and production at Surrey works rationalised
1981	Closure of Chance's glassworks after 177 years operation
1981	Demolition of section of High Street for Tollhouse Way (A457)
1981	Looting in Windmill precinct during national riots
1981	Start of Community Action Project serving Black community in Windmill Lane
1982	Clearance of Avery Road, Black Patch
1982	Unsuccessful Raindi strike over trade union recognition
1982	Closure of St Chad's Hospital
1982	Sandwell becomes Inner Area Programme authority
1982	Raleigh relocate cycle production to Nottingham
1982	Closure of Mansill Booth (hot pressings)
1982	Smethwick Task Force established by DoE
1983	First councillor elected from BME background (Labour, St Pauls)
1983	Unemployment peaks in Smethwick

1984	GKN moves headquarters to Redditch
1984	Housing trust option for Windmill Lane rejected by Sandwell MBC
1984	Establishment of Smethwick Local History Society
1985	Estate housing office opened in Windmill Lane
1985	Launch of PCRL, a Black-led pirate radio station in Hamilton House
1985	Closure of District Iron & Steel, Brasshouse Lane after 134 years
1985	Closure of British Pens in Bearwood Road
1986	Warley College of Technology incorporated into Sandwell College
1986	Co-op superstore closed in Windmill Lane after just 29 months
1987	Black Country Development Corporation established, running until 1997
1987	Closure of Thomas Telford secondary school
1988	Windmill Lane designated as Housing Action Trust (HAT) area
1988	Birmid-Qualcast acquired by Blue Circle in hostile takeover
1988	First significant new private housing in Smethwick since 1930s, at British Pens site
1988	Boulton and Murdock Place demolished
1988	Closure of most of Incandescent Heat Group (foundries)
1989	'Smethwick Initiative' agreed by Sandwell MBC
1989	Opening of Smethwick Pakistani Muslim Association in Corbett Street
1990	Fatal fire at Merryhill Court, Black Patch
1990	26 units built by Focus Housing Association at Black Patch
1990	HAT designation dropped and Estate Action agreed by DoE for Windmill Lane
1991	Unsuccessful Burnsall strike over trade union recognition
1991	Closure of last Birmid operations in Dartmouth Road
1991	Closure of Evered operations at Surrey works after 125 years
1991	Housing voids peak in Smethwick at 9.8 per cent
1992	Closure of Smethwick Hall schools, West Park College and Edith Sands Nursery school
1994	SRB1 scheme in North Smethwick commenced
1994	103 flats in Black Patch transferred to Focus Housing Association
1995	Closure of Merry Hill Infant School, Black Patch
1996	Closure of Midland Centre for Neurosurgery and Neurology
1997	Stock transfer through ERCF rejected in ballot of tenants
1998	SRB4 scheme and Smethwick Regeneration Partnership begin
1998	Holy Trinity joined with St. Stephen and St. Michael's as new Parish of the Resurrection
1998	Closure of Mason's (soft drinks), Grantham Road
1998	Closure of EIS (ex-GKN) ending production in Heath Street after 138 years
1998	Brindley Village housing development underway on canalside
1999	Smethwick Town Committee operates until 2009
1999	North Smethwick Resource Centre including SBYF established in Cambridge Road
1999	Midland Metro Line One opened with station at the Hawthorns
2000	Production of first Smethwick Masterplan
2000	Avery bought from GEC/Marconi by US company Weigh-Tronix
2001	Population low of 44,770 reached

2002	Closure of Best & Lloyd in Wattville Street after 135 years
2002	Closure of Mitchells & Butlers Brewery, Cape Hill
2002	Closure of Cardinal Newman RC Secondary School, Edgbaston
2003	Cape Hill Brewery site acquired for housing
2004	National Asylum Seeker Service contract volumes reduced by council to restrict inflow
2004	Smethwick Town Plan adopted
2004	Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust takes over the Lodge, Victoria Park
2004	Warley Woods Community Trust assume management from Birmingham
2005	Windmill Shopping Centre opened
2006	Sandwell Academy opened on site of Thomas Telford School
2006	Last flats demolished in Black Patch
2007	Demolition of Hamilton House, Windmill Lane
2008	Smethwick Area Action Plan adopted as planning policy
2008	John Hardman & Co. (stained glass) vacate Lightwoods House in park
2010	Closure of Regenco, the Sandwell Urban Regeneration Company
2010	Ownership of Lightwoods Park passed from Birmingham to Sandwell
2011	Workplace employment low reached in Smethwick
2011	Milestone of majority BME population in Smethwick
2011	Premature closure of Urban Living housing market renewal scheme
2011	Smethwick Neighbourhood Plan covering Windmill Lane area adopted as planning policy
2012	Closure by Sandwell College of Crocketts Lane campus (former Chance Technical College)
2012	Foodbank opened at Holy Trinity Church
2013	New housing started at four sites in Windmill Lane
2013	Residential qualification for council tax and housing benefits adopted by council
2013	Five-year residential qualification for council housing introduced
2014	Approval of new Midland Metropolitan Hospital in Grove Lane
2015	Gowling WLG law firm commissioned to investigate political corruption at Sandwell MBC
2015	Labour hold 69 of 72 seats on Sandwell Council

APPENDIX II STUDY INTERVIEWS AND ORAL HISTORIES

This appendix provides background information on the oral histories participants, together with interview and sampling information.

Table A: Interview details and Participant Background

Interviewee	Date	Interview Perspective					
		Community	Political	Council officer	Public body/ other	Private sector	Consultant
Amir Afzal	18-03-14	Yes					
Bob Badham	11-07-13		Yes				
Kerry Bolister	15-10-13			Yes			
Gary Bowman	04-02-14	Yes		Yes			
Nick Bubalo	14-10-13			Yes			
Darren Cooper	11-02-08* 10-07-13 11-09-13		Yes				
Phil Davis	28-06-13		Yes				
Gerry Dawson	11-11-13			Yes			
Cressida Dickens	11-10-13	Yes	Yes				
Ken Duffell	04-07-13		Yes				
Clive Dutton	30-08-13			Yes			
Steve Eling	18-07-13 11-09-13		Yes				
John Garrett	24-06-13			Yes			
Kate Gordon	17-02-16				Yes		
Steve Gregory	10-09-07*			Yes			
David Hallam	11-06-13		Yes				
Trevor Harris	10-09-13	Yes					
Roger Horton	31-07-13		Yes				
Hayley Insley	29-11-07*			Yes			
Paul Jeffrey	13-06-14						Yes
Peter John	10-03-08*			Yes			
Rachael Jones	05-11-07*			Yes			
Gurinder S. Josan	29-11-07* 03-07-13		Yes				
Chris Khamis	06-11-13 04-02-14 03-03-16						Yes

Interviewee	Date	Interview Perspective					
		Community	Political	Council officer	Public body/ other	Private sector	Consultant
Steve Lodder	25-06-13			Yes			
Ged Lucas	17-10-13			Yes			
Rohit Mistry	21-05-13			Yes	Yes		
Marianne Monro	17-06-96* 21-05-13	Yes		Yes	Yes		
Brendan Nevin	06-08-13 24-09-13 07-09-15			Yes			Yes
Roger Page	15-07-13		Yes				
Doug Parish	16-12-13			Yes			
Laurice Ponting	04-07-12			Yes			
Martin Prestidge	12-07-13		Yes				
Aynols Reid	13-02-14	Yes					
David Rhead	01-10-13				Yes		
Neville Rowe	16-05-13			Yes			
Alun Severn	29-01-13	Yes					
Santokh Singh	21-05-14			Yes			
John Spellar	27-01-09* 21-06-13		Yes				
Sandra Spence	08-07-13				Yes		
Geoff Taylor	12-07-13		Yes				
Stewart Towe	28-08-13					Yes	
Peter Tuck	16-12-13			Yes			
Johur Uddin	10-07-13	Yes					
Alan Vernon	02-07-13		Yes				
Ian Waddell	26-09-07*						Yes
Karen Walker	19-09-07*				Yes		
Peter White	26-09-07*						Yes
Pete Wilkinson	06-06-13			Yes			
Diane Wright	04-02-14	Yes		Yes			
Richard Young	31-05-12 25-09-13 23-04-14		Yes				
Total		9	15	22	6	1	5

Table B: Basis of Sample and Interview Structure

	Number	Percentage
Demographic profile		
White male	34	67
White female	7	14
BME male	7	14
BME female	3	6
Estimated age 50+	43	84
Interview basis		
Single individual interviews	34	67
Individuals interviewed more than once	8	16
Single joint interviews	5	10
Multiple joint interviews	0	0
Reflexivity		
Interviewed prior to commencement of research (marked by *)	11	22
Known by author prior to interview	43	84
Summary totals		
Total face-to-face interviews undertaken	57	—
Total persons interviewed	51	100

Biographies of oral history participants at the time of interview

An abbreviated version of this profile is included as a footnote when they are first referenced in each chapter of the thesis and the special notes. A map of the wards represented by councillors interviewed for the study can be seen in Special Note 4.

Amir Afzal lived in Smethwick for 30 years and was since 2009 chair of Smethwick Pakistani Muslim Association (SPMA), based at Corbett Street. His family came from the Mirpur area of Azad Kashmir in Pakistan in 1957, to work in Smethwick's foundries.

Bob Badham MBE grew up in Montague Road in Smethwick. He was a Sandwell Labour councillor from 1976 to 2014 and represented Sandwell and St Pauls wards in Smethwick in 1976–83. He was a past Chair of Sandwell Council for Racial Equality. He had a decade of cabinet responsibility for regeneration in Sandwell council (urban form portfolio 2001–04; regeneration and transport 2005–10) and was a board member at Urban Living and Regenco.

Kerry Bolister was SMBC Area Director—Homes & Communities, succeeding John in 2011. She was previously chief neighbourhood renewal officer at Wolverhampton and worked for Focus, a housing association, which later became Midland Heart.

Gary Bowman lived in Soho and Victoria since 1997. He was Service Manager—Area Working at Sandwell MBC, covering community development, voluntary sector, neighbourhood management, community safety and anti-social behaviour issues. He was Director of the Sandwell Partnership (the LSP) from 2001–11.

Nick Bubalo was a planner with Sandwell since 1985, responsible for land-use planning and since 2011, Area Director—Regeneration and Economy, with responsibility for Smethwick and West Bromwich.

The author, **Adam Carey** was born in Bearwood, Smethwick in 1964 and was educated locally before graduating in political science at the University of Birmingham. From 1988–96 he represented the Abbey ward of Smethwick as a Labour councillor on Sandwell MBC, alongside Eling. He served as Vice Chair of Education and Chair of the Budgetary Committee. He was a Director of CSR Partnership from 1996–2006 (with Khamis, Waddell and White) and a Director of ECORYS from 2006–9 (with Jeffrey). From 2009–10 he was Director of Strategy at Urban Living (with Dawson) and in 2011–12, interim Head of Community Investment at Family Housing Association. From 2012 he was a non-executive Director of Black Country Housing Group (previously with Spence).

Darren Cooper was a Labour Councillor for Soho and Victoria ward since 1991 (alongside Horton) and Sandwell Council Leader from 2010. He grew up in Windmill Lane, living at Charles Spragg House and a Grove Lane townhouse. A mental health nurse, he worked at nearby All Saints hospital before its closure in the 1990s.

Philip Davis grew up in Lennard Gardens, Black Patch. The son of Soho Labour councillor Ron Davis (1920–96), he was active in the Labour Party Young Socialists in the Warley era. His interest in heritage secured listed status for the toll house in Smethwick High Street in 1971.

Gerry Dawson was interim chief executive of Urban Living, the Birmingham-Sandwell housing market renewal pathfinder in 2007–08 and previously a chief officer in housing and regeneration in Dudley, Wolverhampton and Telford and Wrekin.

Cressida Dickens grew up in Edgbaston Road in Smethwick as the daughter of Charles Dickens, the Conservative election agent for Peter Griffiths in the 1964 general election.

Ken Duffell was a member of the Sandwell Youth Club, where a colour bar operated in the early 1960s. He was elected to the Victoria ward of the new Warley council aged 25, in a by-election in 1966 but lost his seat in 1968, in a wipe-out year for the Labour party in Smethwick. He also briefly lived in the newly-completed West Smethwick estate.

Clive Dutton OBE worked at BCDC, headed Tipton City Challenge 1993–96, and was Sandwell Head of Regeneration 1996–2000. After a period as Director of Regeneration for a major private developer, he was Director of Planning and Regeneration at Birmingham (2005–09) and then then Executive Director at Newham until 2013.

Steve Eling grew up in Bearwood and was Labour Councillor for Abbey ward since 1986; the first Labour councillor to represent Bearwood since 1948. He was Vice Chair of Housing from 1988–90, Chair/Cabinet member for Regeneration from 1990–2004 and Deputy Leader and Finance lead since 2004 (succeeding Young). He also chaired Tipton Challenge Partnership and Smethwick Regeneration Partnership. He was a driving force behind the formation of the Warley Woods Community Trust, which he chaired since its inception.

John Garrett worked in Sandwell from 1984–91 and since 2008 as Sandwell MBC Corporate Director for Place and then Deputy Chief Executive. He was a social worker in the Smethwick and Brandhall areas in the 1980s and lived in Uplands and Bearwood between 1988 and 2004.

Kate Gordon was team leader of the Citizens Advice Bureau based on the West Smethwick estate in 1985–6.

Steve Gregory was an Assistant Director in Sandwell Housing with responsibility for housing strategy from 1988–97. He succeeded Lucas as Director of Housing in 1997 and became Sandwell Executive Director of Urban Form in 2001 and Executive Director of Urban Regeneration in 2004 until he retired in 2009.

David Hallam lived in Bearwood since 1973. He was a Victoria ward Labour councillor from 1976–79 and was replaced by Horton following a boundary change. He was also a former MEP and gained an MA in West Midlands Local History at the University of Birmingham.

Trevor Harris grew up in Woodlands Street, in Smethwick and remembered the 1964 parliamentary election. He was Deputy Head at the primary school serving the West Smethwick estate. He also gained a MA in West Midlands Local History at the University of Birmingham.

Roger Horton grew up in Mornington Road and lived in Murdock Place from its completion in 1956 to 1971 and then Hamilton House until 1975. He succeeded Prestidge as councillor for Soho ward from 1975–79 and represented the new Soho and Victoria ward since 1979.

Hayley Insley was a Sandwell planner since 1989 in the local plans team, producing the 2004 Smethwick town plan and the 2008 area action plan.

Paul Jeffrey was an economic development and regeneration consultant, as Director of ECOTEC until 2012 and then Director at ICF GHK.

Peter John was Head of Housing Direct Services at Sandwell Homes (the ALMO) before replacing Wilkinson as lead officer for housing strategy. From 2008–11 he was Director of Partnerships and then Housing and Area Director—Homes & Communities.

Rachael Jones was Smethwick Town Manager from 2004–08.

Gurinder Singh Josan lived and worked in Smethwick and was a Labour councillor for St. Pauls ward from 2002–10. His family arrived in Smethwick in 1958 and his father, Swaran S. Josan represented St. Pauls from 1986 to 2001. He was active in Guru Nanak Gurdwara Smethwick.

Chris Khamis was chief executive of Wolverhampton City Challenge from 1992–96 and subsequently worked as an urban regeneration consultant. While at CSR Partnership he assisted with the community visioning and overall development of the Smethwick SRB4 bid, its strategic framework and delivery plan and the subsequent Smethwick regeneration strategy. He also supported the Smethwick Regeneration Partnership Board on succession planning. He subsequently worked with several Smethwick community organisations.

Steve Lodder was a housing manager based at Smethwick Council House from 1974 to his retirement in 2010. He was Deputy Area Manager for Smethwick in 1979–80 and then Smethwick Area Manager to 1988. He was District Housing Manager for the south east of Sandwell from 1988 to 1998. He was then a Director of Operations (alongside Ponting) until 2003. He was head of private sector housing from 2003 to 2010.

Ged Lucas was Director of Housing in Sandwell from 1992–97. He was Deputy Chief Executive at Stockport MBC from 1997–2012 and was at different points responsible for regeneration, planning, housing, environmental health, adult social care and leisure.

Rohit Mistry was Windmill Lane Neighbourhood Manager in 2008–10 and then Director of Friends and Neighbours CiC in Soho and Victoria ward.

Marianne Monro grew up in Windmill Lane, Smethwick. She lived in private rented lodgings in Union Street until it was cleared to make way for Tollhouse Way in 1970 and was rehoused into Murdock Place, then the Price Street flats and then Victoria Court—all subsequently demolished. She was community development officer in Smethwick and West Bromwich since the late 1980s and worked at Friends and Neighbours CiC.

Brendan Nevin worked at the Lion Farm housing office in Sandwell before leading on housing strategy at Sandwell MBC from 1993–96. He also produced Sandwell’s first regeneration strategy in 1994. As an academic he evaluated the BCDC programme, the HAT designation and the Windmill Lane Estate Action scheme. He was later an architect of the national housing market renewal programme, through advice to the Department for Communities and Local Government and various pathfinder schemes, later holding executive roles in the North Staffordshire and Merseyside pathfinders.

Roger Page grew up in Cheshire Road, was active in Smethwick Labour Party from 1960 and a past chair of Warley East Labour Party. He was a Bristnall ward Labour councillor in 1994–2002 with Young. He also lived in Windmill Lane in the 1980s and was heavily involved in the anti-HAT campaign.

Doug Parish was a senior officer in the Sandwell environmental health department after 1974, with responsibility for private sector clearance before retiring in 1996. He was later a Sandwell Labour councillor until 2006.

Laurice Ponting was a District Housing Manager in Sandwell from 1989 and Operations Director (alongside Lodder) before succeeding Nevin as head of housing strategy between 1996 and 2002. She was Chief Executive of Mercian Housing Association from 2002 to 2012 and then Executive Director at Genesis Housing Association.

Martin Prestidge grew up in Oldbury. He was elected to Warley Council in 1971 and the inaugural Sandwell council in 1973 for Soho ward in Smethwick, until he was replaced by Horton in 1975. He also represented the combined Soho, St. Pauls and Sandwell wards on the West Midlands County Council. He later served as a Langley councillor on Sandwell council from 1987 to 2012.

Aynols Reid came to Smethwick from Jamaica in 1989, living first at Hamilton House and then in the New Hope estate. He was a Board Member of the Soho and Victoria Friends & Neighbours CiC and was active in the tenant panel advising in the Windmill Lane masterplan in 2009–10. He succeeded Wright in chairing Cape Hill and Windmill Area Sure Start until 2012. He was also the tenant Board member for Smethwick on Sandwell Homes from 2006 until the ALMO returned to the council in 2013.

David Rhead was Senior Area Manager, Homes and Communities Agency Midlands. He was previously a manager at English Partnerships which he joined after working at BCDC between 1990 and 1998. He was heavily involved in the North Smethwick canalside project covering Brindley 2 and Rolfe Street.

Neville Rowe was a housing research officer and manager at Sandwell MBC since 2002.

Alun Severn moved to Marshall Street, Smethwick as a four year-old and lived there from 1958 to 1974. Later he was a freelance consultant specialising in the third sector and social enterprise, and writing on UK race relations.

Santokh Singh was Smethwick Town Manager from 2008.

The Rt Hon **John Spellar** was the Labour MP for Warley, the parliamentary constituency including Smethwick, since 1997 (Warley West 1992–97).

Sandra Spence was Chief Executive of Black Country Housing Group from 1990–2013. She was a member of various partnership boards, including Urban Living.

Geoff Taylor grew up in Oldbury. He stood for Warley Council in 1971 and was a Sandwell Labour councillor from 1973–84 and 2000–04. He was a past chair of Warley East Labour Party.

Stewart Towe CBE was CEO of Hadley Group, a Smethwick firm, joining the Hadley Board in 1978 and undertaking a management buy-out in 2006. He was involved in successive local regeneration partnerships dating back to Smethwick SRB and chaired the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership from 2010.

Peter Tuck worked at Sandwell MBC from 1977 to 2010, working with Parish and afterwards Lodder as an environmental health and later private sector housing manager.

Johur Uddin came to Birmingham in 1968 from Bangladesh. He was the Chief Executive of Community Connect Foundation, a community organisation which grew out of the Smethwick Bangladeshi Youth Forum (SBYF). He worked for a legal firm advising residents opposing the Sydenham Road CPO in 1991 and returned to work in North Smethwick in 1995 at SBYF.

Alan Vernon grew up in Woodlands Street, Smethwick. He was elected as a Conservative councillor for the Soho ward of Smethwick Council in 1964 at the age of 22, when he defeated the Labour mayor. He subsequently served as a magistrate, chair of the local police consultative committee, and chair of the governing body of Rood End Primary School.

Ian Waddell was also a Director at CSR Partnership from 1997–2006 and worked on the Smethwick masterplan and canalside studies and a number of ERDF projects for Smethwick and Sandwell.

Karen Walker was Chief Executive of Regenco, the Sandwell URC from 2006–09.

Peter White was also a Director at CSR Partnership from 1997–2006 and was lead consultant for the Smethwick masterplan and canalside studies.

Peter Wilkinson succeeded Ponting as head of housing strategy from 2002–07. He started work in Warley LEA in 1967 and worked in Sandwell Housing from 1974–2007, including spells as an area manager, district housing manager and special projects manager.

Diane Wright was the Neighbourhood Manager for West Bromwich town and Windmill Lane resident. In a voluntary capacity she was a Board member of the Soho and Victoria Friends & Neighbours CiC, and previously chaired Cape Hill and Windmill Area Sure Start.

Richard Young was elected as Sandwell Labour councillor for Bristnall ward at the age of 23 in 1991 and served until 2004. He was Vice Chair of Housing from 1990–95, Cabinet member for Finance from 1997–2004 and Deputy Leader from 1999–2004. He lived in the Baldwin and Price Street estate in Windmill Lane in 1990–91.

Interview Consent Form used in research interviews, 2012–16

Course: Master of Philosophy in Modern History
Department: Centre for West Midlands History, College of Arts & Law
Thesis Title: Politics, Governance and the Shaping of Smethwick since 1945
Researcher: Adam Carey
Supervisor: Dr Malcolm Dick

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the covering letter and information sheet for the above study.
2. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, and received satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.
4. I agree to take part in the above study.
5. I agree to the interview being audio recorded (voice only).
6. I am participating on the basis that interview recordings and transcripts will be held in confidence by the researcher or securely destroyed. They will not be used other than for the purposes described above and third parties will not be allowed access to them without my prior agreement (except as may be required by the law).
7. I understand that parts of our conversation may be used verbatim/in summary in an anonymised form in future publications or presentations.
8. I confirm that any direct quotes or any views attributed to me (as distinct from being used anonymously) will need to be approved by me, via a draft interview write-up, prior to use in future publications or presentations.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Date	Signature
 Adam Carey		
_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

Two copies are to be signed by both interviewee and researcher with one kept by each.

APPENDIX III SPECIAL NOTES

Introduction

Some special notes are technical in nature, providing a detailed explanation of the data sources and method of calculation of the statistics used in the thesis, particularly the longitudinal datasets. Three of these—population, housing and economy—include comparative data for Salford. A fourth main area—electoral data, is presented both for Smethwick and its governing environment of Sandwell. Other notes provide supporting evidence for particular arguments or issues in the thesis.

1. Comparator areas to Smethwick and the selection of Salford

This technical note outlines the process of identifying an appropriate comparator area for the purposes of this study. Several statistical studies can be consulted to identify related postwar areas to Smethwick. In the first of these, Moser and Scott analysed fifty-seven variables for 157 English towns based on c.1951 data, using component analysis and clustering techniques for socio-economic, demographic and housing amenity elements.¹ This identified several groups of industrial towns, with Smethwick included in a group of fourteen ‘more recent metal-manufacturing towns’; along with Oldbury, Walsall and Stoke-on-Trent. In contrast, a ‘mainly north-eastern and mining group’ nevertheless included Salford and West Bromwich.

¹ Claus Moser and Wolf Scott, *British Towns: A statistical study of their social and economic differences* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1961), 17.

Grove and Roberts revisited the Moser-Scott data using mode analysis to place Smethwick *inter alia* with Huddersfield in 1951 and Salford with Wolverhampton. Their comparison for 1971 grouped Warley (incorporating Smethwick and Oldbury after 1966) with West Bromwich and Walsall; and Salford with Manchester, Stretford and Liverpool. However, they and Davies in a related study acknowledge the difficulty in isolating and naming individual industrial town groups.² An earlier reappraisal of Moser-Wolf by Andrews used their 1951 data to suggest different clusters (this time Smethwick was placed in a group including Wolverhampton). However he also recognised the limited value of such classifications.³

Table 1 shows that Smethwick was at the extreme end of several ranked variables among the 157 English towns in the Moser and Scott study, including industrialisation and reliance on local authority house building; issues discussed in the thesis. The approach taken was therefore to review detailed postwar data for twelve individual towns linked with Smethwick in these studies and make a subjective judgment in selecting suitable individual comparator areas, with Salford chosen. While only indirectly linked to Smethwick in the statistical analyses, it had a markedly similar urban form and density, limited amenity and an early leakage of population and jobs. The policy response of Salford to urban change is also a relevant and instructive comparison to Smethwick and is considered in the thesis.

² D. M. Grove and Carole A. Roberts, 'Principal Component and Cluster Analysis of 185 Large Towns in England and Wales', *Urban Studies* 17/1 (1980), 77–82; E.M. Davies, 'A Longitudinal Study of Urban Populations in England and Wales 1951–1971', *Urban Studies*, 16/2 (1979), 165–77.

³ Howard F. Andrews, 'A Cluster Analysis of British Towns', *Urban Studies* 8/1 (1971), 271–84

Table 1: Smethwick and comparator areas among 157 Towns in England and Wales, c.1951

	Town average	Salford		Smethwick	
		Value	Rank	Value	Rank
Total population 1951 (000s)	84	178	25	76	89
Surface area in acres 1951 ^A	7,817	5,202	113	2,496	154
Population density per acre 1951 ^A	13.8	34.3	7	30.6	10
% change in population 1931–51	11	-20.2	154	-9.5	146
Net migration measure: % population change excluding births/deaths 1931–51	2.5	-25.7	153	-18.5	148
% change in population 1951–58	-0.2	-8.2	154	-4.9	143
% of overcrowded households (composite indicator) 1951	5.9	7.9	38	7.4	48
% of households with 5 amenities 1951	65	43	151	44	150
New housing build rate 1945–58, per 1,000 1951 population	48	16	152	19	148
Local authority % of new build housing 1945–58	72.8	81.3	46	96.8	2
Economically occupied as % of population aged 15+ 1951	59.7	68.5	4	66.2	17
Manufacturing as % of employed total 1951	41.6	51.8	50	75.1	2
Area employment density: jobs per acre 1951 ^A	6.0	16.6	8	19.0	4
Industrialisation ranking: average of manufacturing share and employment density ranks 1951 ^A	78	...	10	...	1
Jobs ratio: employed in area to resident population 1951	99	92	94	121	14
Commuting ratio: travel in/out to occupied resident population 1951	51	70	55	96	16
% change in area employment 1951–61 ^{A B}	5.1	-14.0	151	-18.5	155
Middle class (social classes I and II) 1951	15.8	11.2	139	11	140
Life expectancy at year 1 1950–52	70.1	67.6	156	69.8	95
15-24s in full-time education 1951	8.1	4.6	152	5.3	147

Source: Claus Moser and Wolf Scott, *British Towns: A statistical study of their social and economic differences* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1961); and Census of Population, 1951 and 1961 (see notes below).

^A Adapted from General Register Office, 'Census 1951 England and Wales: Preliminary Report', Table 1; GRO, 'Census 1951 England and Wales: Report on Usual Residence and Workplace', Table 5.

^B Adapted from General Register Office, 'Census 1961 England and Wales: Workplace Tables', Tables 2 and 5. Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

Note: Comparators selected on the basis of best fit from twelve potential comparators drawn from the statistical studies: Birmingham; Dudley; Gateshead; Huddersfield; Liverpool; Manchester; Oldbury; Salford; Stoke-on-Trent; Walsall; West Bromwich; and Wolverhampton.

2. Governance and Decline in Liverpool

This note discusses the contribution of governance failure to the decline of Liverpool, governance failings. The costs of economic decline were exacerbated by a series of self-inflicted housing and planning mistakes over decades leading to neighbourhood breakdown.⁴ These included population dispersal, clearance blight, mass housing schemes, housing allocations, political instability and an inability to manage place through mainstream investment. Liverpool developed as the 'Gateway to Empire' but its port entered into secular decline from the 1920s.⁵ Although it benefitted from postwar redistributive industrial policy, multinational business-takeovers and disinvestment culminated in economic collapse, triggering the full gamut of national and European regeneration programmes.⁶ Rapid nineteenth-century growth had created appalling environmental and social problems, notably overcrowding.⁷ Like Manchester, this prompted planned population dispersal. Until the early 1970s Liverpool anticipated

⁴ Michael Parkinson, 'Leadership and Regeneration in Liverpool: Confusion, confrontation or coalition?', in Dennis Judd and Michael Parkinson (eds.), *Leadership and Urban Regeneration: Cities in North America and Europe* (London: SAGE, 1990), 241; Brendan Nevin, 'Housing Market Renewal in Liverpool: Locating the gentrification debate in history, context and evidence', *Housing Studies*, 25/5 (2010), 715–33, 717–8; Oliver Sykes, Jonathan Brown *et al.*, 'Profile of Liverpool', *Cities: The International Journal of Urban Policy and Planning*, 35 (2013), 299–318, 10.

⁵ Parkinson, 'Leadership and Regeneration in Liverpool', 245; Richard Lawton and Colin Pooley, 'Liverpool and Merseyside', in George Gordon (ed.), *Regional Cities in the UK 1890–1980* (London: Harper and Row, 1986), 69–70; Patricia Kennett, Gerwyn Jones *et al.*, 'Recession, Austerity and the "Great Risk Shift": Local government and household impacts and responses in Bristol and Liverpool', *Local Government Studies*, 41/4 (2015), 622–44, 625.

⁶ H. B. Rodgers, 'Manchester Revisited—A profile of urban change', in H. P. White (ed.), *The Continuing Conurbation: Change and development in Greater Manchester* (Farnborough: Gower, 1980), 33–4; Brian Rodgers, 'Manchester—Metropolitan planning by collaboration and consent; or civic hope frustrated', in George Gordon (ed.), *Regional Cities in the UK 1890–1980* (London: Harper and Row, 1986), 49; C. M. Law, 'Post-war Employment Changes', in H. P. White (ed.), *The Continuing Conurbation: Change and development in Greater Manchester* (Farnborough: Gower, 1980), 41–3; Parkinson, 'Leadership and Regeneration in Liverpool', 246; Richard Meegan, Patricia Kennett *et al.*, 'Global Economic Crisis, Austerity and Neoliberal Urban Governance in England', *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 7/1 (2014), 137–53, 138. The 55–72 (depending on how they are counted) government urban policy-related programmes directly affecting Liverpool are discussed in C. Webber and A. Marshall, 'Bridging the Gap: Delivering infrastructure investment in Britain's cities', *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, 1/1 (2007), 7–21, 10.

⁷ Lawton and Pooley, 'Liverpool and Merseyside', 61, 72.

meeting only a quarter of housing need within the city.⁸ From the 1920s onwards, the local authority constructed major peripheral council estates.⁹ It additionally decanted 160,000 people into overspill areas outside Liverpool.¹⁰ These shifts and voluntary outmigration of the more affluent halved the city's population by 2001.¹¹

Liverpool's unfit housing had been reduced to 73,700 by 1965, with some 12,200 houses cleared since 1955.¹² But progress was seen by national government as too slow.¹³ The council's 1966 plan proposed demolition of 70 per cent of the Victorian city.¹⁴ Such mass clearance was unmanageable and resulted in blight.¹⁵ Wholesale redevelopment in Everton nevertheless created a ward dominated by council flats.¹⁶ Mass housing, clearance orders and private rehabilitation activity meant the council had assumed responsibility for the housing market across the core.¹⁷ A DoE study graphically recorded its collapse by the mid-1970s.¹⁸ An influential article by Stone argued Liverpool's clearance programme

⁸ Lawton and Pooley, 'Liverpool and Merseyside', 77.

⁹ Lawton and Pooley, 'Liverpool and Merseyside', 72, 77;

¹⁰ Sykes, Brown *et al.*, 'Profile of Liverpool', 10.

¹¹ The population was recorded as 855,688 in 1931 and 439,473 in 2001, a decline of 48.6 per cent: General Register Office, 'Census of England and Wales, 1931: County of Lancaster (Part I)', [statistical report], London: HMSO, 1935, Table 2; General Register Office, 'Census 1951 England and Wales: County Report—Lancashire', [statistical report], London: HMSO, 1954, Table 2. Note: Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016. Also see Chris Couch and Matthew Cocks, 'Underrated Localism in Urban Regeneration: The case of Liverpool, a shrinking city', *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, 4/3 (2011), 279–92, 286.

¹² Jim Yelling, 'The Incidence of Slum Clearance in England and Wales, 1955–85', *Urban History*, 27/2 (2000), 234–54, 245.

¹³ John English, Ruth Madigan, and Peter Norman, *Slum Clearance: the social and administrative context in England and Wales* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), 28.

¹⁴ Sykes, Brown *et al.*, 'Profile of Liverpool', 10.

¹⁵ Nevin, 'Market Renewal in Liverpool', 719.

¹⁶ Lawton and Pooley, 'Liverpool and Merseyside', 77.

¹⁷ Nevin, 'Market Renewal in Liverpool', 719.

¹⁸ Department of the Environment, 'Inner Area Study Liverpool: Project report', [government report], London: HMSO, 1974, 15; cited in Nevin, 'Market Renewal in Liverpool', 719; Department of the Environment, 'Inner Area Studies Liverpool, Birmingham and Lambeth: Summaries of consultants' final reports', [government report], London: HMSO, 1977, 4; and see Lawton and Pooley, 'Liverpool and Merseyside', 73.

outstripped its capacity to rebuild, resulting in dereliction in the city centre.¹⁹ A 1972 Shelter report also forecast a surplus of 21,700 council units by 1980.²⁰

City centre flats and economically-disconnected peripheral estates exhibited neglect, disrepair and social stress marked by poverty, but also letting to 'difficult tenants'.²¹ Central to housing policy, said DoE, was a 'failure to realise the implications of accelerating economic decline'. It criticised reliance on capital housing programmes, with no targeting of statutory services to local needs.²² Meanwhile, private clearance into the early 1970s in the core was propping-up council housing demand until the switch to renewal through targeted general improvement and housing action areas.²³ The population of Everton dropped by 58 per cent in the 1980s.²⁴ Some 25,000 council houses were eventually demolished in the city, including multi-storey blocks in Netherley completed eight years earlier.²⁵ The national shift to means-tested private renovation grants then dissipated improvement activity, and decline resumed in the renewal areas during the 1990s. Falling population density and spending power undermined the viability of neighbourhood services and infrastructure and

¹⁹ Alan Stones, 'Stop Slum Clearance—Now', *Official Architecture and Planning*, 35/2 (1972), 107–10, cited in English, Madigan *et al.*, 'Slum Clearance', 36. Also Chris Khamis, 'Interviews with Author', 6 November 2013, 4 February 2014 and 3 March 2016. Also see David Donnison and Claire Ungerson, *Housing Policy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), 157.

²⁰ Shelter, 'Another Chance for Cities', [opinion piece], *SNAP 69/72*, Liverpool: Shelter, Neighbourhood Action Project, 1972 cited in Nevin, 'Market Renewal in Liverpool', 719.

²¹ Department of the Environment, 'Inner Area Studies Summaries', 6; Lawton and Pooley, 'Liverpool and Merseyside', 72–3, 78.

²² Department of the Environment, 'Inner Area Studies Summaries', 6, 8.

²³ Nevin, 'Market Renewal in Liverpool', 719.

²⁴ From 13,344 to 5,564: Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1981 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', [statistical report], <<http://casweb.mimas.ac.uk>>, [contains public sector information licensed by the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v3.0 via UK Data Service—Casweb], accessed 18 January 2014, Table 1; Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1991 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', [statistical report], <<http://casweb.mimas.ac.uk>>, [contains public sector information licensed by the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v3.0 via UK Data Service—Casweb], accessed 24 January 2014, Table 1.

²⁵ Lawton and Pooley, 'Liverpool and Merseyside', 78; Nevin, 'Market Renewal in Liverpool', 720.

poor, functional neighbourhoods unravelled.²⁶ House prices collapsed and vacancies ran above 32 per cent in some neighbourhoods by the early 2000s.²⁷

3. Austerity and Local Government

This note discusses the onset of austerity as a new paradigm following the 2007–8 banking crisis. The literature review suggested that despite central fiat, councils avoided an agency role and retained a capacity over decades to drive multiple agendas.²⁸ But 2010 represents a breakpoint in the conduct of the state, expressed in the formula of ‘austerity-localism’. As Hastings *et al* put it: local government ‘becomes both more marginalised and, paradoxically, responsibilised’.²⁹ The long-held ability of councils to provide place leadership, at least for areas now undergoing complex change, may be fatally undermined.

2010 marked a political response to a major recession both set off and deepened by a major banking and finance crisis from 2007.³⁰ This followed a period of reckless lending and profiteering, eventually demanding enormous state bailouts.³¹ Notwithstanding this,

²⁶ Department of the Environment, 'Inner Area Studies Summaries', 12; Nevin, 'Market Renewal in Liverpool', 718.

²⁷ Nevin, 'Market Renewal in Liverpool', 727.

²⁸ Dennis Judd and Michael Parkinson, 'Leadership and Urban Regeneration', in Dennis Judd and Michael Parkinson (eds.), *Leadership and Urban Regeneration: Cities in North America and Europe* (London: SAGE, 1990), 15.

²⁹ Annette Hastings, Nick Bailey *et al.*, 'Coping with the Cuts? The management of the worst financial settlement in living memory', *Local Government Studies*, 41/4 (2015), 601–21, 618.

³⁰ Nick Bailey, Glen Bramley, and Annette Hastings, 'Symposium Introduction: Local responses to "Austerity"', *Local Government Studies*, 41/4 (2015), 571–81, 572; Lee Pugalís and Joyce Liddle, 'Austerity Era Regeneration: Conceptual issues and practical challenges, Part 1', *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, 6/4 (2013), 333–8, 333.

³¹ Betsy Donald, Amy Glasmeier *et al.*, 'Austerity in the City: Economic crisis and urban service decline?', *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 7/1 (2014), 3–15, 4–5.

the state was characterised as the central problem to be solved.³² For Levitas, austerity was a 'justifying mantra' for a 'neoliberal shock doctrine'.³³ This involved fundamental state-rescaling and restructuring through privatisation and cuts.³⁴ Bailey *et al* similarly saw austerity as a political choice, not as an inevitable or unavoidable adjustment. Thus three-quarters of the deficit reduction programme in 2010–15 was planned to come from spending cuts.³⁵ From this viewpoint, localism is an instrument for implementing cuts.³⁶ Hastings *et al* discussed the resulting reshaping of central-local relations through the intersection of the austerity and localism agendas.³⁷ Accordingly councils should 'behave more entrepreneurially, lead on economic growth, distribute welfare, displace social care responsibility to families, and generally . . . manage the outcomes of spatial polarisation at the local level'.³⁸ This has been termed 'risk-shift'.³⁹

Housing policy is an example of 'risk-shift'. Policy from 2015 promoted private ownership at the expense of social housing. Fixed-term tenancies, pay-to-stay for higher-earners, and a shift to market rents were expected to discourage long-term use of the

³² Lee Pugalis and Joyce Liddle, 'Austerity Era Regeneration: Conceptual issues and practical challenges, Part 2', *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, 7/2 (2014), 105–10, 105.

³³ Ruth Levitas, 'The Just's Umbrella: Austerity and the Big Society in coalition policy and beyond', *Critical Social Policy*, 32/3 (2012), 320–42, 322. Also see Alan Southern, '"Regeneration" in a time of austerity will mean the death of this metaphor, but what will come next?', *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, 6/4 (2013), 399–405, 399.

³⁴ Donald, Glasmeier *et al.*, 'Austerity in the City', 11; Peter Taylor-Gooby, 'Root and branch restructuring to achieve major cuts: The social policy programme of the 2010 UK coalition government', *Social Policy & Administration*, 46/1 (2012), 61–82, 65.

³⁵ Bailey, Bramley *et al.*, 'Local Responses', 572–3.

³⁶ Stuart Wilks-Heeg, '"You can't play politics with people's jobs and people's services"—Localism and the politics of local government finance', *Local Economy*, 26/8 (2011), 635–51, 636.

³⁷ Hastings, Bailey *et al.*, 'Coping with the Cuts?', 617.

³⁸ Hastings, Bailey *et al.*, 'Coping with the Cuts?', 618.

³⁹ Kennett, Jones *et al.*, 'Great Risk Shift', 623; Darinka Asenova, Stephen Bailey, and Claire McCann, 'Managing Municipal Austerity: Mitigation of social risks', *Local Government Studies*, 41/1 (2014), 1–19, 4.

sector.⁴⁰ Associated welfare cuts included the bedroom tax, the £20,000 cap and subjecting the new Universal Credit to a multi-year value freeze.⁴¹ Tenure change was to be induced by transferring new-build subsidy from affordable housing to government starter-homes, the forced sale of high-value council stock and extension of right to buy to housing associations.⁴² The one per cent per year, £2.2bn reduction in social housing rents was expected to curtail investment and trigger rationalisation and takeover in the housing association sector. The outcome was predicted to include displacement into the private rented sector, including multi-occupancy.⁴³

Local government was deregulated to a degree under localism, with the Audit Commission abolished along with the national performance framework it oversaw.⁴⁴ As discussed in the thesis, a move for 'city-regionalisation' of 'natural economic areas' with the aim of increasing urban economic competitiveness gathered pace in the 2000s. In contrast, the regional agencies set up by Labour were abolished in 2010. The development of conurbation-based 'combined authorities' was underway by 2015. This was led by Manchester, which gained significant devolution of powers and budgets.⁴⁵ But concomitant austerity resulted in a 37.3 per cent fall in government funding to local authorities from

⁴⁰ 'Social housing: Future, what future?', *Shelter Policy Blog* [blog], <<http://blog.shelter.org.uk/2015/10/social-housing-future-what-future/>>, accessed 29 January 2016.

⁴¹ North Housing Consulting Limited, 'Housing Policy: Where are we and where are we going?', [consultancy report], Cheddleton: North Housing Consulting, 2015, 4.

⁴² 'Social housing: Future, what future?'

⁴³ 'Social housing "faces slow death" with 88,000 homes forecast to be lost by end of decade', *Independent*, 29 January 2016.

⁴⁴ Bailey, Bramley *et al.*, 'Local Responses', 576.

⁴⁵ Centre for Cities, 'Cities Outlook 2015', [opinion piece], 8, London: Centre for Cities, 2015, 7, 24; 'The secret negotiations to restore Manchester to greatness', *Guardian*, 12 February 2015. The West Midlands Combined Authority will commence in 2016. For a useful background on Black Country-Birmingham local authority relationships that held it back in comparison with Manchester, see Steven Henderson, 'From Sub-Regional Networks to Sub-Regional Localism: Experiences of collaboration in England's historical Black Country', *Regional Studies*, 49/9 (2015), 1497–513.

2010–15.⁴⁶ Cuts were projected to continue until 2020.⁴⁷ Local authorities faced severe ‘budget gaps’ – the combination of funding reductions and cost pressures.⁴⁸

Their adaptive capacity enabled councils to manage the severity of cuts in the early years of austerity; initially through ‘efficiency savings’, although the National Audit Office was unclear on this point.⁴⁹ For John, this demonstrated resilience rather than vulnerability: with a strong centre, outer elements and budgets could be sacrificed without affecting identity and saliency.⁵⁰ Shaw identified a scenario of seizing opportunities even within a crisis.⁵¹ However, a subsequent shift from efficiency to retrenchment approaches was apparent.⁵² As cuts continued, an early view that ‘all local authority services are now at risk of reduction or complete disappearance’ appeared more relevant.⁵³

The burden of cuts to local government was not distributed evenly across authorities, with metropolitan councils most adversely affected.⁵⁴ So Liverpool, the most deprived of the eight core English cities was cut most; Bristol the least, despite being the

⁴⁶ National Audit Office, ‘The Impact of Funding Reductions on Local Authorities: Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General’, [government report], *Local Government Report*, London: National Audit Office, 2014, 11.

⁴⁷ HM Treasury, ‘Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015’, [government report], *Cm 9162*, London: The Stationery Office, 2015, 100. Also see Bailey, Bramley *et al.*, ‘Local Responses’, 576.

⁴⁸ National Audit Office, ‘Impact of Funding Reductions’, 10.

⁴⁹ Hastings, Bailey *et al.*, ‘Coping with the Cuts?’, 610; Kennett, Jones *et al.*, ‘Great Risk Shift’, 640; National Audit Office, ‘Impact of Funding Reductions’, 9.

⁵⁰ Peter John, ‘The Great Survivor: The persistence and resilience of English local government’, *Local Government Studies*, 40/5 (2014), 687–704, 688, 692.

⁵¹ Keith Shaw, ‘The Rise of the Resilient Local Authority?’, *Local Government Studies*, 38/3 (2012), 281–300, 297.

⁵² Hastings, Bailey *et al.*, ‘Coping with the Cuts?’, 616; Asenova, Bailey *et al.*, ‘Managing Municipal Austerity’, 9.

⁵³ Levitas, ‘Just’s Umbrella’, 323.

⁵⁴ National Audit Office, ‘Impact of Funding Reductions’, 6.

least deprived.⁵⁵ Cuts in Liverpool were exacerbated by regeneration programmes ending, such as the housing market renewal scheme prematurely terminated in 2010, leaving boarded-up and cleared sites.⁵⁶ The differential geography of cuts was further reinforced by the uneven impacts of the recession and other austerity measures, notably ‘welfare reform’.⁵⁷ Economically weaker places and people were most adversely affected, so that existing inequalities were compounded.⁵⁸ Changes to the local government finance system were published in 2015 to allow future 100 per cent retention of locally-generated business rates, but ending revenue support grant to local authorities.⁵⁹ Such regressive policy could create divergent patterns of development and outcome.⁶⁰ It might lead to ‘two leagues of local authorities’ emerging: distinguished by respective capacity, local economies (and tax base) and service pressures.⁶¹

Hastings *et al* identified a ‘marginalisation’ scenario, with a loss of centrality of councils to individual and community well-being, with continued cuts undermining the principle of universal provision.⁶² In suggesting that ‘services for poor people are poor

⁵⁵ Kennett, Jones *et al.*, ‘Great Risk Shift’, 629. The divergent case of Liverpool and Bristol is also explored in Meegan, Kennett *et al.*, ‘Neoliberal Urban Governance’. The studies used data based on Department for Communities and Local Government, ‘The English Indices of Deprivation 2010’, [statistical report], London: CLG, 2010.

⁵⁶ Sykes, Brown *et al.*, ‘Profile of Liverpool’, 6; Philip Leather and Brendan Nevin, ‘The Housing Market Renewal Programme: Origins, outcomes and the effectiveness of public policy interventions in a volatile market’, *Urban Studies*, 50/5 (2013), 856–75, 873.

⁵⁷ Bailey, Bramley *et al.*, ‘Local Responses’, 575.

⁵⁸ Meegan, Kennett *et al.*, ‘Neoliberal Urban Governance’, 151; Kennett, Jones *et al.*, ‘Great Risk Shift’, 640.

⁵⁹ HM Treasury, ‘Spending Review 2015’, 100.

⁶⁰ Stephen Syrett and David North, ‘Between Economic Competitiveness and Social Inclusion: New Labour and the economic revival of deprived neighbourhoods’, *Local Economy*, 25/5–6 (2010), 476–93, 490–1; Meegan, Kennett *et al.*, ‘Neoliberal Urban Governance’, 151; Bailey, Bramley *et al.*, ‘Local Responses’, 579; Pugalís and Liddle, ‘Austerity Era Regeneration Part 1’, 334; Pugalís and Liddle, ‘Austerity Era Regeneration Part 2’, 110.

⁶¹ Hastings, Bailey *et al.*, ‘Coping with the Cuts?’, 615. Also see Gill Bentley and Lee Pugalís, ‘New Directions in Economic Development: Localist policy discourses and the Localism Act’, *Local Economy*, 28/3 (2013), 257–74, 270.

⁶² Hastings, Bailey *et al.*, ‘Coping with the Cuts?’, 616–7.

services' they argued targeting loses support for council services and taxes from the better-off and may hasten urban exit.⁶³ Moreover, they contended that ongoing loss of staff with substantial tacit and embodied knowledge undermined future adaptive capacity, leading to risk of service failures.⁶⁴ Bailey *et al* underlined that even 'efficiency savings' from the 'back-office' introduced new kinds of risk for authorities affecting the vital corporate core. Continued efficiency gains may be hampered, or a failure to design or deliver effective prevention measures.⁶⁵

4. Defining Smethwick—Changing boundaries and area identity

This note offers a definition of 'Smethwick'—its historical evolution, changing administrative basis and the notion of contemporary Smethwick being both a 'place' and 'places'.

Hackwood opened his 1898 account by remarking: 'In tracing the history of Smethwick the first peculiarity which will arrest the mental consciousness of the observant reader will be the long continuance of the place in the state of quasi-oblivion.'⁶⁶ In 1675 Smethwick was only a 'discontinued village' strung-out along the Birmingham-Dudley Road.⁶⁷ The pre-industrial hamlet of Smethwick formed the northern part of the 'hour-glass' shaped

⁶³ The quotation is from J. McCormick and C. Philo, 'Where Is Poverty? The hidden geography of poverty in the United Kingdom', [statistical report], *Off the Map: The social geography of poverty in the UK*, London: Child Poverty Action Group, 1995, cited in Hastings, Bailey *et al.*, 'Coping with the Cuts?', 617.

⁶⁴ Hastings, Bailey *et al.*, 'Coping with the Cuts?', 610.

⁶⁵ Bailey, Bramley *et al.*, 'Local Responses', 577.

⁶⁶ F. W. Hackwood, *Some Records of Smethwick*, ed. Alan Vernon (Studley: Brewin, 2001), 1.

⁶⁷ J Ogilby, *Britannia*, as cited in G. C. Baugh, M. W. Greenslade, and D. A. Johnson, 'Smethwick', in M. W. Greenslade (ed.), *History of the County of Stafford* (The Victoria History of the Counties of England, XVII; London: University of London, Institute of Historical Research, 1976), 87. Harborne village and the parish church lay in the southern half. The 'neck' between them was crossed by the road from Birmingham to Stourbridge, which was turnpiked in 1753: Victor Skipp, *A History of Greater Birmingham—Down to 1830* (2nd edn.; Birmingham: Brewin, 1997), 64.

Harborne Parish, which dated back to 1086.⁶⁸ This was formalised with the Smethwick Township and Board of Health district formed from the split with Harborne in 1856.⁶⁹ Eight acres north of the canal were transferred from Smethwick to West Bromwich in 1897.⁷⁰ Following this boundary adjustment, Smethwick was constituted as a municipal borough covering 1,929 acres: here termed the '1899 borough area'. In 1928, 571 acres were transferred from Oldbury to Smethwick as the new Warley Woods ward; the expanded Smethwick here termed the '1928 county borough area'. The evolution of Smethwick from 'hamlet to county borough' as Inskip put it, is shown in Figure 1.⁷¹ Note: The term 'historic Smethwick' as used in the thesis refers to Smethwick as it was constituted from 1928–66. Where appropriate, census data for the entire period 1921 to 2011 is also presented in tables and maps for the eight wards of Smethwick Corporation after 1928. These are similarly described as 'historic wards' in the thesis.

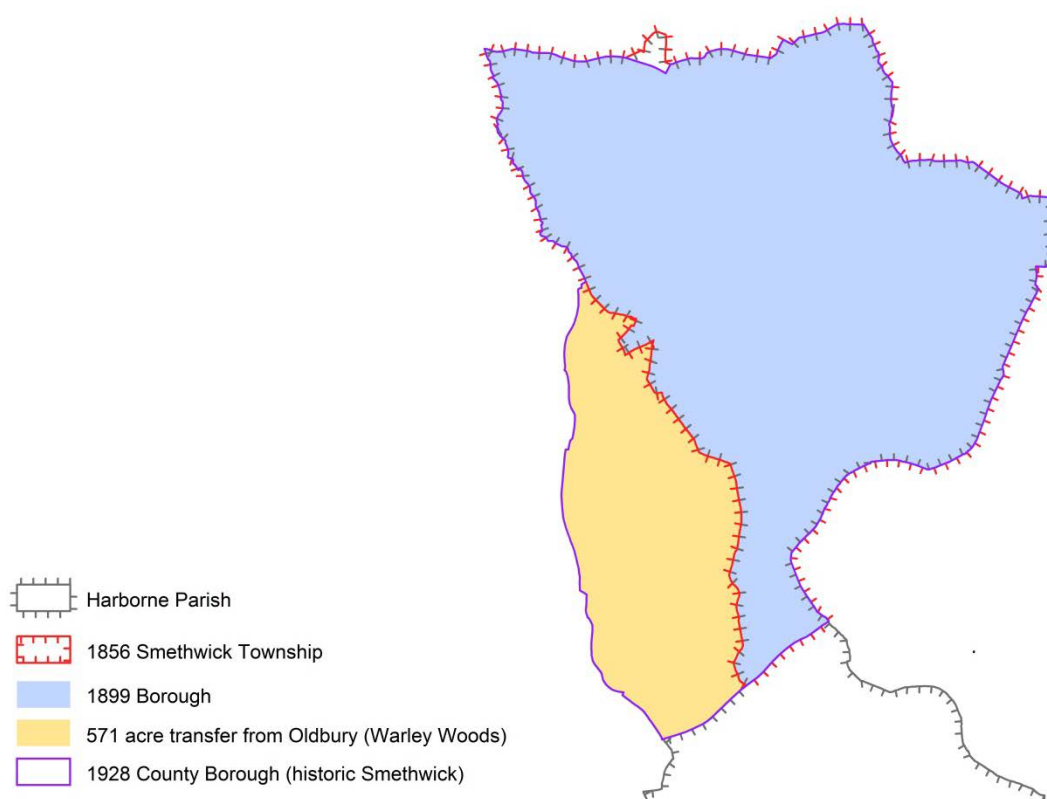
⁶⁸ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 98. For maps of the hour-glass shape of Harborne Parish see William Yates's 1775 map of Staffordshire: Eric Richardson, *The Black Country as seen through Antique Maps: A Survey from 1579 to 1895* (Kingswinford: Black Country Society, 2000), 19; Edward Chitham, *Harborne: A History* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2004), 3.

⁶⁹ K. W. Inskip, 'Smethwick from Hamlet to County Borough: A brief history', [research study], Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1966, 9; Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 121-2, 136.

⁷⁰ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 87.

⁷¹ Also see Special Note 23: The Smethwick Development Plan and 'overspill' housing.

Figure 1: 'Smethwick from Hamlet to County Borough', 1086–1966



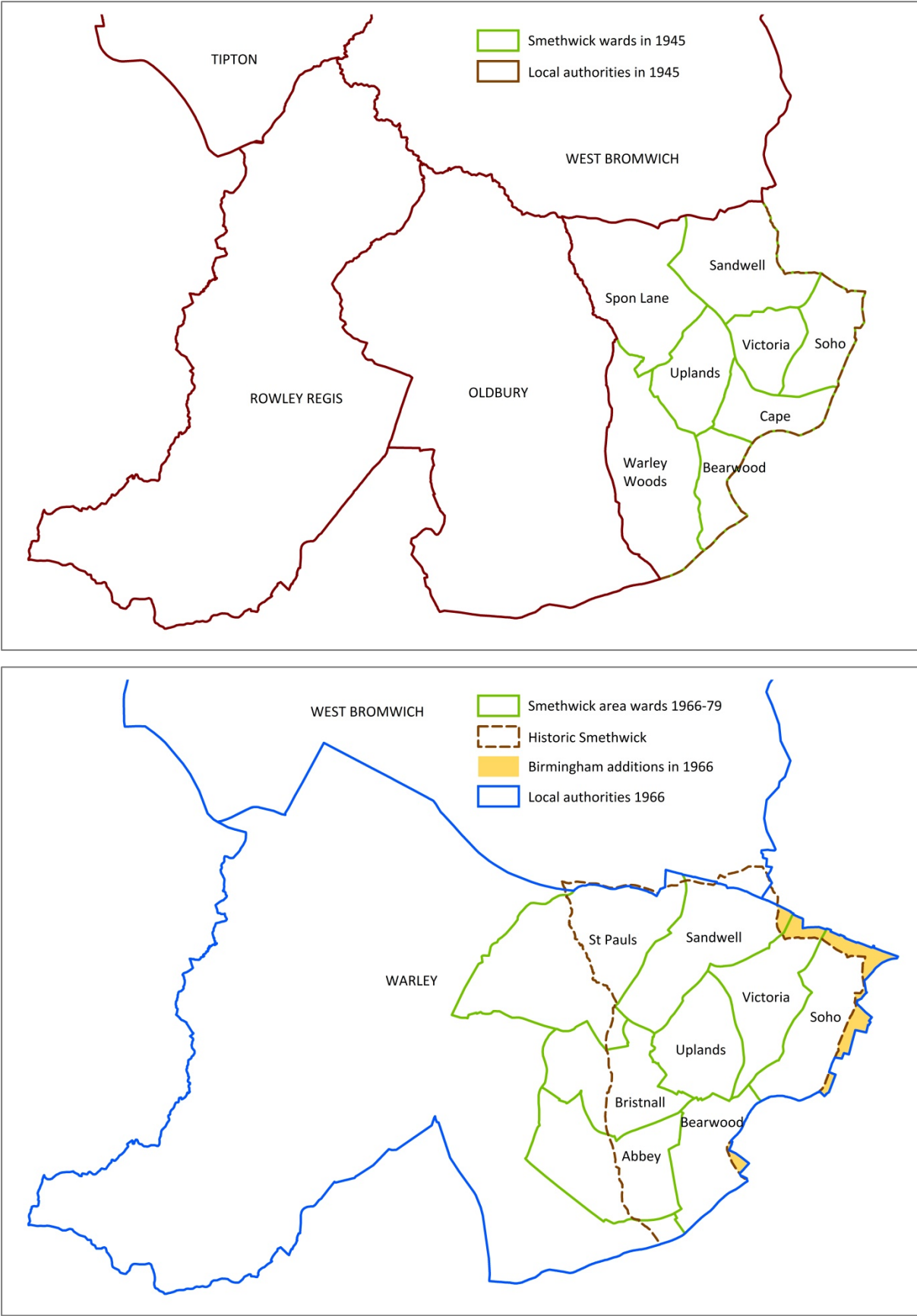
Source: Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A Landmark Information Group Ltd/EDINA product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

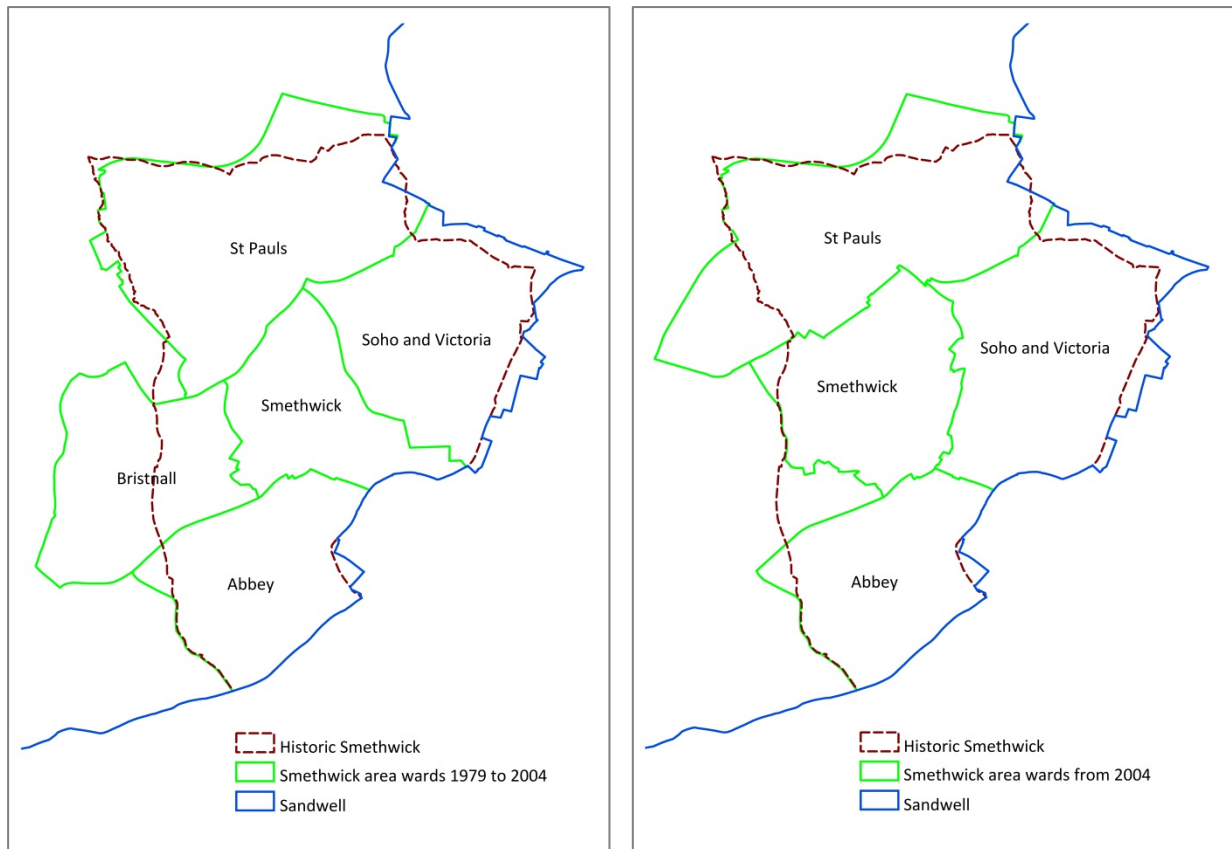
Ward boundaries and names are one guide to Smethwick localities, but they change over time (see Figure 2). Wards, after all, are electoral territories that need to be of a similar size and neutrally framed within a local authority jurisdiction to avoid gerrymandering. In 2000, the local authority also identified 88 'neighbourhoods' in Sandwell, of which ten were located in historic Smethwick (Figure 3). As Smethwick's population disproportionately declined within Sandwell, ward boundary revisions were made in 1979 and 2004. The historic Smethwick (pre-1966) 'Spon Lane' and 'Sandwell' ward names were anyway confusing, because neighbouring West Bromwich County Borough also had adjacent wards with the same names. Both Smethwick and Birmingham included 'Soho' wards. On the other hand, the recognisable area of Uplands continued to be a ward name from 1966 to 1979, before being renamed, confusingly, 'Smethwick' ward in 1979. The pre-

1966 Bearwood ward only covered the part of Bearwood within Smethwick before the 1928 borough expansion. After 1979, Bearwood formed part of a sensibly expanded ward, but was given the meaningless name of 'Abbey' ward.

Only four of the new wards from 1966 lay wholly within historic Smethwick, but another four of the five 'cross-border' wards were mainly Smethwick in population terms. These are therefore counted as Smethwick area wards for the purpose of this analysis. The number of Sandwell wards was reduced from 30 to 24 in 1979. Only two of the new wards lay wholly within historic Smethwick, but another two were overwhelmingly Smethwick-based. Another, Bristnall, equally straddled former Smethwick and Oldbury, but comprised housing mostly built by Smethwick Corporation. It is therefore also counted as a fifth Smethwick area ward for the purpose of this analysis. Boundary changes in 2004 left four best-fit Smethwick area wards. These changing area composites provide the basis of datasets in the thesis, notably employment and unemployment trends and electoral analysis.

Figure 2: Changing Administrative Geography of Smethwick, 1945 to 2015





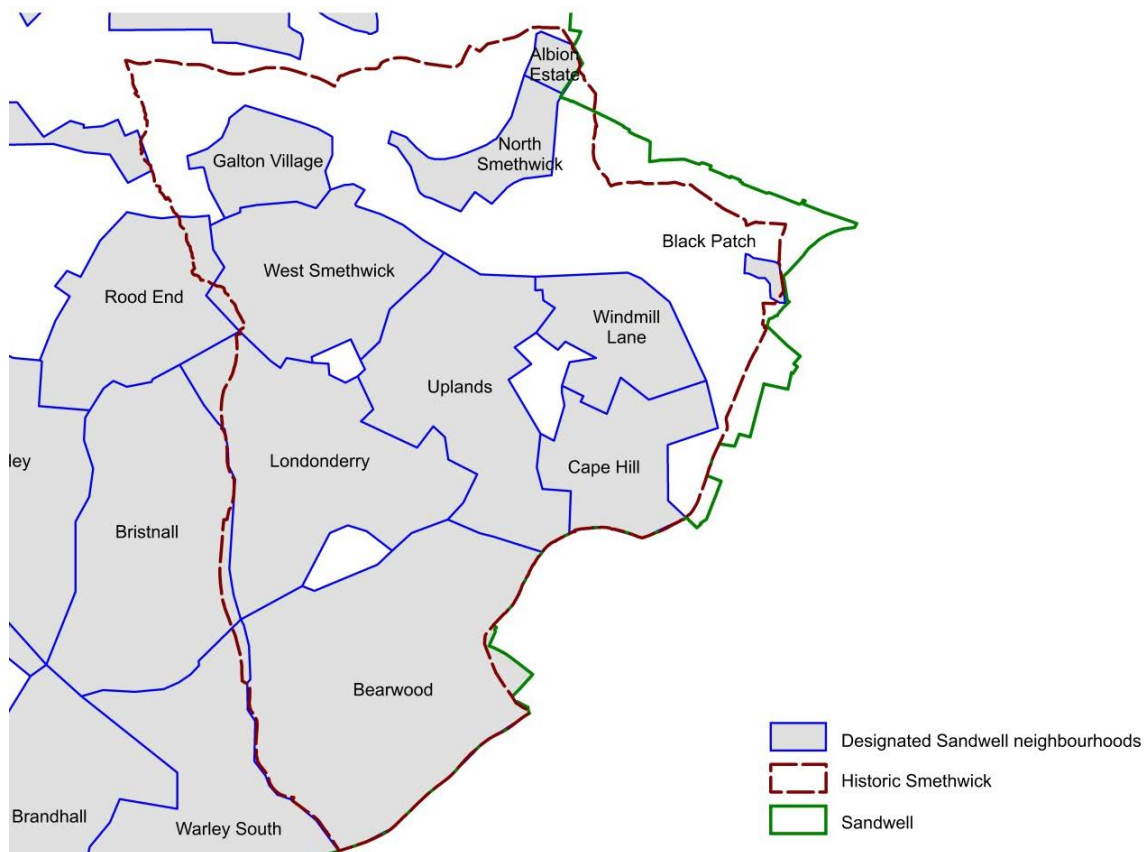
Source: Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. Landmark Information Group Ltd/EDINA and UK Data Service products. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

Some of the earliest research for the thesis was in age-mapping the urban form of Smethwick. This predated valuable landscape studies and heritage assessments covering the Black Country and Birmingham (Greater Manchester similarly was mapped at this time).⁷² The Smethwick analysis aimed to address two obvious problems in historical urban mapping. Mapping the period built of current housing ignored any past housing obliterated in urban cores; it did not reveal the evolution of the urban form. Alternatively tracing the

⁷² CgMs Consulting, 'Urban Living: Birmingham and Sandwell Pathfinder Heritage Assessment', [consultancy report], London: CgMs Consulting, 2008; Paul Quigley, 'The Black Country: A historic landscape characterisation', [research study], Wolverhampton: Wolverhampton City Council, Black Country Archaeology Service, 2009; Paul Quigley, 'Recycled Landscape—The Legacy of 250 years in the Black Country: Historic landscape characterisation', [research study], Wolverhampton: Wolverhampton City Council, Black Country Archaeology Service, 2010; Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit, 'Slices Through Time: Greater Manchester's Historic Character Revealed', [research study], *Greater Manchester Historic Landscape Characterisation Project*, Salford: GMAU, 2012; Adrian Axinte, 'Birmingham Historic Landscape Characterisation', [research study], Birmingham Birmingham City Council, Planning Strategy Team, 2015.

age of first development identified urban spread from pre-industrial centres and for cities, typically exhibiting inner and outer suburban rings. But this can overlook successive housing activity in the same area or show as 'new' any built-on scraps of 'greenfield' land in otherwise dense city centre development. The approach taken was therefore to age map all housing in Smethwick current at a particular period to capture its urban dynamism and complexity.

Figure 3: Identified Neighbourhoods in Smethwick, 2000



Christine Wright, '*Boundaries of Area-based Initiatives (ABIs) in Sandwell, Black Country and Birmingham*', [TAB file geospatial data], digitised 1992–2009. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

This urban form research used Geographical Information Systems (GIS) techniques. As discussed in Chapter 1, GIS allows the processing and analysis of large and complex data sets to be mapped to illustrate locations of activity and their wider relationships. This

exercise used a time-series of electronically digitised, large-scale base maps for nine intervals from 1828 to 2007.⁷³ These were aligned and layered in GIS to enable shuffling between dates so that the same location, such as a factory building or block of housing, could be examined over time. Such base maps can be annotated with boundary and land-use information and this data is layered on top of the map, like layers of paint. Thus GIS assembles dozens of 1:1250 map sheets (as 'tiles') into a single map with the age data as an overlay through which the map detail can still be seen.

This historical GIS vividly demonstrates the evolution of Smethwick, showing for example that 'slum-housing' in Smethwick developed over a century and not as a monolithic surge. Equally, with most of the planners' maps detailing the post-war clearance areas now lost, GIS allowed the detailed mapping of housing clearance, including a property count.⁷⁴ The technique also illuminated the complex pattern of change in three specific areas: Windmill Lane and Black Patch (see Chapter 5) and West Smethwick (see Special Note 17). GIS also illustrated the successive layering of public intervention in Smethwick through ABIs (see Chapter 4). It informed the representations of the urban form and neighbourhood function Smethwick in 1945 and 2015, as shown in Chapter 3 and 6 maps respectively. It also assisted the identification of changing historic boundaries, particularly wards (Figure 2).

⁷³ These are listed in the Bibliography. The acquisition of the 1857 Roper map was particularly fortunate. The late David Bryant MBE, founding chair of the Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust was given 35 sheets of the Roper map (only sheet 14 was missing) by an official of Smethwick Corporation. In a chance conversation in 2007 he learned of the author's interest and very kindly made him a copy.

⁷⁴ Special Note 6: Housing data for Smethwick.

5. Creating a Population time series for historic Smethwick

This technical note explains the sources and methodology for the population time series and associated variables produced for Smethwick. Both the rapid nineteenth-century growth of Smethwick and its postwar decline were significant, but available data proved limited. The history published by the departing Smethwick Corporation (termed here the 'Inskip dataset') omitted populations for 1811, 1831 and 1851; it used marginally inaccurate figures in places; was based on inconsistent geographies; and extended only to 1961.⁷⁵ This geography was anyway redundant after 1966. Yet without using historically accurate area boundaries for each time interval used, one cannot tell whether statistical changes reflect changes in population, changes in boundary lines, or both.

It was therefore necessary to create a continuous and consistent dataset for the period 1801 to 2011 for the 'historic Smethwick' area; its eventual 1928 boundary. Table 2 duly lists the successive population counts from published data sources for 'Smethwick': namely the '1899 borough area' and its expanded '1928 county borough area' available until 1961 (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). Table 2 is thus a corrected, completed version of the Inskip dataset. To be consistent, however, the calculation needs to include retrospective population data for 1801 to 1921 to reflect the 1928 land transfer. Fortunately a retrospective population count for 1871–1921 was made in the 1931 census following the 1928 land transfer (Table 3). This was not used in the Inskip dataset. A population estimate for this then rural area for the earlier 1801–61 period is derived from a count of the few houses depicted in available nineteenth-century maps; with a population calculated from

⁷⁵ Inskip, 'Hamlet to County Borough', table: 'Population according to the Census', 14.

the application of average household size in England according to the census.⁷⁶ The resulting population data and sources for the 1928 addition (Warley Woods) are shown in Table 4.

With the ending of Smethwick as a separate local authority area in 1966, census data was no longer published for this specific geography. For the period 1971–2011, subsequent data used was based on aggregations of enumeration districts (ED) until 1991 and output areas (OA) subsequently. These are the smallest published census geography. In the cases of cross-boundary OA/ED, the population totals were proportionately apportioned to Smethwick geographies according to a count of dwellings made from available twentieth-century maps for c.1976 and 2007 (see Special Note 4).⁷⁷ The required boundaries for the later 1991–2001 censuses were available from ONS.⁷⁸ ED boundaries for 1971 and 1981 were digitised for GIS use from maps of Birmingham and Sandwell supplied by ONS in 2007.⁷⁹ Derived from 35 mm film (1971) and scanned maps (1981), the original boundaries

⁷⁶ The 41 dwellings in the Warley Woods area in c.1861 evident in contemporary maps suggests a higher population (c.200) than the 1871 population figure of 102 retrospectively published in 1931. This discontinuity in Table for 1861 and 1871 could not be resolved, but is a minor detail in the scope of the thesis.

⁷⁷ Whilst the apportionment was considered 99 per cent accurate in proportional terms, the approach assumes homogenous characteristics that are evenly distributed across the ED/OA. This does not materially affect the total population count, but it may affect other variables such as ethnicity or economic activity. For example, it would be possible for the Black and minority ethnic or unemployed population to live solely in the non-Smethwick part of the split ED/OA, but to be proportionately counted in the Smethwick total. However, the small size of these geographies (average population of 496 for ED and 321 for OA) meant this risk was limited and outweighed by the benefit of an area-consistent population count.

⁷⁸ 'English Enumeration Districts 1991—SN:5819 UKBORDERS: Digitised Boundary Data, 1840– and Postcode Directories, 1980–', [SHAPE geospatial data], 2013. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153, using public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0 via UK Data Service, <<http://census.ukdataservice.ac.uk/get-data/boundary-data.aspx>>, downloaded 4 March 2013; 'English Output Areas 2001—SN:5819 UKBORDERS: Digitised Boundary Data, 1840– and Postcode Directories, 1980–', [SHAPE geospatial data], 2013. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153, using public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0 via UK Data Service, <<http://census.ukdataservice.ac.uk/get-data/boundary-data.aspx>>, downloaded 4 March 2013

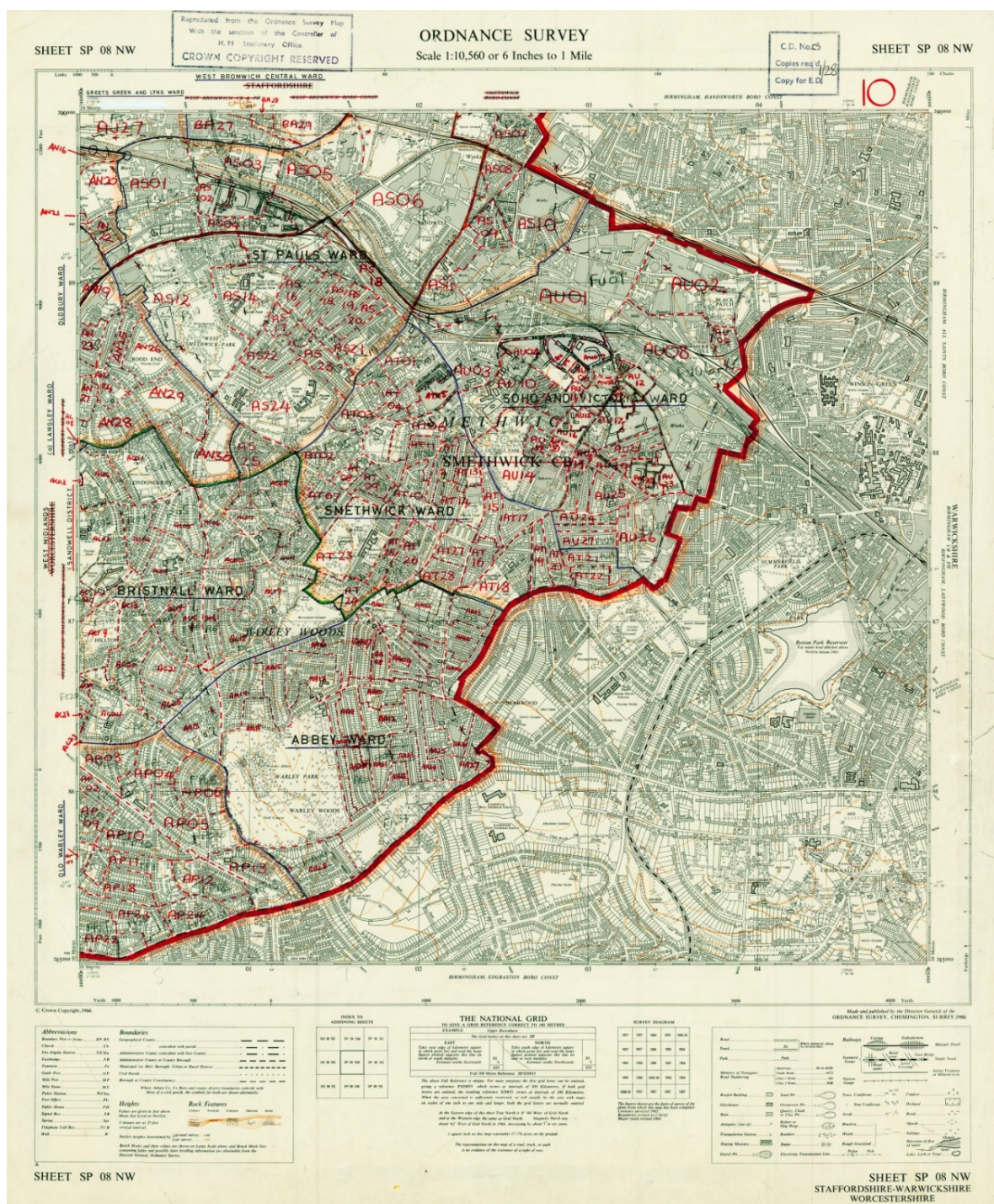
⁷⁹ Adam Carey, '1971 Census Enumeration District Boundaries—Birmingham and Sandwell Areas', [TAB geospatial data], digitised 2007. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153, public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0, data obtained from ONS 2

were hand-drawn and annotated on base maps dating from the mid-1950s. In places these were affected by subsequently comprehensive clearance and therefore new street layouts, requiring some deciphering to enable accurate digital mapping (Figure 4). The resulting population estimate for the period 1971 to 2001 is shown as Table 5.

To conclude this note, Table 6 is consequently the basis for all population figures used for 'Smethwick' in the thesis. Table 7 and Figure 5 provide trend household data on the same basis. Note that where appropriate, for 1921–2011 such data is also disaggregated to the eight historic wards areas as constituted from 1928 to 1966 (Table 8 and Table 9). These wards are discussed in Special Note 4 and mapped at Figure 2.

February 2007; Adam Carey, '*1981 Census Enumeration District Boundaries—Birmingham and Sandwell*', [TAB geospatial data], digitised 2007. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153, public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0, data obtained from ONS 2 February 2007.

Figure 4: 1981 Enumeration District boundaries for the Smethwick Area



'1981 Census Enumeration District Boundaries—Smethwick Area', from OPCS, *1981 Ward Library Maps*, Sheet SP 08 NW. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153. Reproduced by permission of Census Customer Services, Office for National Statistics: Caz Austen, 16 February 2015.

Table 2: Published Population totals for ‘Smethwick’, 1801 to 1961

Year	Population	Source	Spatial area	Administrative area note
1801	1,097	K. W. Inskip, 'Smethwick from Hamlet to County Borough: A brief history', Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1966, 14.	Northern Harborne Parish ^A	Table title: ‘Population according to Census’
1811	1,328	F. W. Hackwood, <i>Some Records of Smethwick</i> , ed. Alan Vernon (Studley: Brewin, 2001), 101.	Northern Harborne Parish ^A	Data source not stated but assumed to be Census
1821	1,950	Inskip, 'Hamlet to County Borough', 14.	Northern Harborne Parish ^A	Table title: ‘Population according to Census’
1831	2,676	Census Office, 'Census of Great Britain, 1831: Abstract of the Answers and Returns—Enumeration Abstract Vol II', 588.	Northern Harborne Parish ^A	Smethwick Chapelry within Harborne Parish within a table listing parishes, townships and extra-parochial places
1841	5,020	General Register Office, 'Census of Great Britain, 1841: Abstract of the Answers and Returns—Enumeration Abstract, MDCCCXLI', 289.	Northern Harborne Parish ^A	Smethwick Chapelry within Harborne Parish within a table listing parishes, townships and extra-parochial places
1851	8,379	General Register Office, 'Census of Great Britain, 1851: Population Tables—Appendix I Ecclesiastical Divisions of England and Wales', 17.	Northern Harborne Parish ^A	Aggregation of ‘Smethwick’ and ‘North Harborne’ areas within a table listing ecclesiastical districts and new parishes
1861	13,360	General Register Office, 'Census of Great Britain, 1861: Population Tables—Numbers and Distribution of the People of England and Wales—Volume 1', Table A, 483.	Smethwick Township ^B	‘North Harborne’, ‘St. Matthews’, ‘St. Pauls West Smethwick’ and ‘Smethwick’ within a table listing ecclesiastical districts and new parishes
1871	17,158	General Register Office, 'Census of Great Britain, 1871: Population Tables—Area, Houses and Inhabitants—Volume 1 Counties', Table 9, 349.	Smethwick Township ^B	Smethwick Hamlet within a table listing Local Board Districts, Towns etc.
1881	25,084	General Register Office, 'Census of Great Britain, 1881: Volume II—Area, Houses and Population—Registration Counties', Table 5, 359.	Smethwick Township ^B	Smethwick, Harborne within a table listing sanitary districts

Year	Population	Source	Spatial area	Administrative area note
1891	36,170	General Register Office, 'Census of Great Britain, 1891: Area, Houses and Population—Vol. II Registration Areas and Sanitary Districts', Table 4, 581.	Smethwick Township ^B	Smethwick within a table listing sanitary districts with the constituent civil parishes of the urban district
1901	54,539	General Register Office, 'Census of England and Wales, 1901: County of Stafford—Area, Houses and Population', Table 9, 16.	1899 borough area	Smethwick Municipal Borough
1911	70,694	General Register Office, 'Census of England and Wales, 1911: Area, Families or Separate Occupiers, and Population—Volume I Administrative Areas', Table 10, 300.	1899 borough area	Smethwick County Borough
1921	75,760	General Register Office, 'Census of England and Wales, 1921: County of Stafford', Table 2.	1899 borough area	Smethwick County Borough
1931	84,406	General Register Office, 'Census of England and Wales, 1931: County of Stafford (Part I)', 1935, Table 2.	1928 county borough area	Smethwick County Borough
1939	78,290	West Midland Group, <i>Conurbation: A Survey of Birmingham and the Black Country</i> , Table VI, 75.	1928 county borough area	Registrar-General's Mid-Year Estimate, Smethwick County Borough
1951	76,407	General Register Office, 'Census 1951 England and Wales: County Report—Staffordshire', Table 2.	1928 county borough area	Smethwick County Borough
1961	68,390	General Register Office, 'Census 1961 England and Wales: County Report—Staffordshire', Table 2.	1928 county borough area	Smethwick County Borough

^A Although the census is not explicit, it is reasonable to assume data for the period 1801–51 equates to the northern half of Harborne Parish covered by the 'Smethwick Chapelry' served by Smethwick Old Church since 1732.

^B The census descriptions vary for Smethwick in the period 1861–91, but with the advent of the Board of Health from 1856 it is reasonable to assume these entries equate to Smethwick Township area.

Note: Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

Base: Usual resident population.

Table 3: Retrospective Census adjustments to recorded Smethwick Population to reflect 1928 expansion for the period 1871–1921

Year	Originally reported population 1871 to 1921—Table 2	Revised population reflecting ‘intercensal variations’ (1931 Census)	Difference—1928 extension (Warley Woods area)
1871	17,158	17,260	+102
1881	25,084	25,225	+141
1891	36,170	36,322	+152
1901	54,539	55,186	+647
1911	70,694	75,583	+4,889
1921	75,760	82,123	+6,363

Base: Usual resident population.

Source: General Register Office, 'Census of England and Wales, 1931: General Tables', Table 11 Population and Intercensal variations 1871–1931.

Note: Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0.

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Table 4: Population of the 1928 land addition to Smethwick, 1801 to 2011

Year	Population	Basis of calculating 1928 area
1801	168	Estimated from dwelling count
1811	178	Estimated from dwelling count
1821	175	Estimated from dwelling count
1831	191	Estimated from dwelling count
1841	200	Estimated from dwelling count
1851	198	Estimated from dwelling count
1861	207	Estimated from dwelling count
1871	102	Census retrospective revision
1881	141	Census retrospective revision
1891	152	Census retrospective revision
1901	647	Census retrospective revision
1911	4,889	Census retrospective revision
1921	6,363	Census
1931	12,477	Census
1939	15,000	Estimated
1951	16,480	Census
1961	14,333	Census
1971	12,470	Census—apportioned
1981	11,735	Census—apportioned
1991	11,336	Census—apportioned
2001	11,158	Census—apportioned
2011	11,116	Census—apportioned

Base: Usual resident population for census from 1871.

Source: For 1801–61, property count from Eileen Smith, *'The Township of Smethwick in the Parish of Harborne and the County of Staffordshire circa 1828'*, [TIFF geospatial data], surveyed 1828 [based on survey of Henry Jacob of Birmingham with additional details researched by SLHS 1994], © Smethwick Local History Society; Mary Bodfish, *'Warley Salop, Warley Wigorn and Oldbury and Langley Townships'*, [Hand-drawn tracings], produced using the 1844 Tithe map by Houghton, provided 24 June 2007; Terry Daniels *'Distribution of Land between the Townships, 1844'*, [JPEG file], © Copyright Terry Daniels 2016, produced using the 1844 Tithe map by Houghton—Warley Salop, Warley Wigorn and Oldbury and Langley, Cakemore and Ridgacre townships, provided 17 December 2014; Henry C. Roper, *'Plans of the Hamlet of Smethwick in the Parish of Harborne in the County of Stafford—Surveyed for the purposes of the Public Health Act 1848'*, [TIFF geospatial data], single sheet published 1858 [digitised from original paper map], © Sandwell Community History and Archive Service. For 1871–1921 see Table 3 and for 1931–2001 see Table 2 and Table 10.

Note Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

Table 5: Estimated Population totals for ‘historic Smethwick’, 1971 to 2011

Year	Population	Source	Administrative area note^A
1971	62,254	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1971 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table c71s01_032.	Census enumeration districts
1981	55,793	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1981 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table 81sas020050.	Census enumeration districts
1991	48,292	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1991 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table S010064.	Census enumeration districts
2001	44,770	Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2001 England and Wales: Key Statistics', Table KS0010001.	Census output areas
2011	51,285	Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2011 England and Wales: Key Statistics', Table KS101EW.	Census output areas

Base: Usual resident population.

^A Matched to 1928 County Borough area by apportioning census EDs 1971–91 and OAs 2001–11.

Note: Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0.

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Table 6: Population time-series used in thesis for ‘historic Smethwick’ area

Year	1898 area	1928 extension (Warley Woods)	Historic Smethwick area (1928 area)	Basis of calculating 1928 extension
1801	1,097	168	1,265	Estimated
1811	1,328	178	1,506	Estimated
1821	1,950	175	2,125	Estimated
1831	2,676	191	2,867	Estimated
1841	5,020	200	5,220	Estimated
1851	8,379	198	8,577	Estimated
1861	13,360	207	13,567	Estimated
1871	17,158	102	17,260	Census retrospective revision
1881	25,084	141	25,225	Census retrospective revision
1891	36,170	152	36,322	Census retrospective revision
1901	54,539	647	55,186	Census retrospective revision
1911	70,694	4,889	75,583	Census retrospective revision
1921	75,760	6,363	82,123	Census
1931	71,929	12,477	84,406	Census
1939	63,290	15,000	78,290	Estimated
1951	59,927	16,480	76,407	Census
1961	54,057	14,333	68,390	Census
1971	49,783	12,470	62,254	Census—apportioned
1981	44,058	11,735	55,793	Census—apportioned
1991	36,955	11,336	48,291	Census—apportioned

Year	1898 area	1928 extension (Warley Woods)	Historic Smethwick area (1928 area)	Basis of calculating 1928 extension
2001	33,611	11,158	44,770	Census—apportioned
2011	40,169	11,116	51,285	Census—apportioned

Base: Usual resident population.

Source: Table 2 to Table 5.

Note: Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0.

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Table 7: Total Households in historic Smethwick, 1931 to 2011

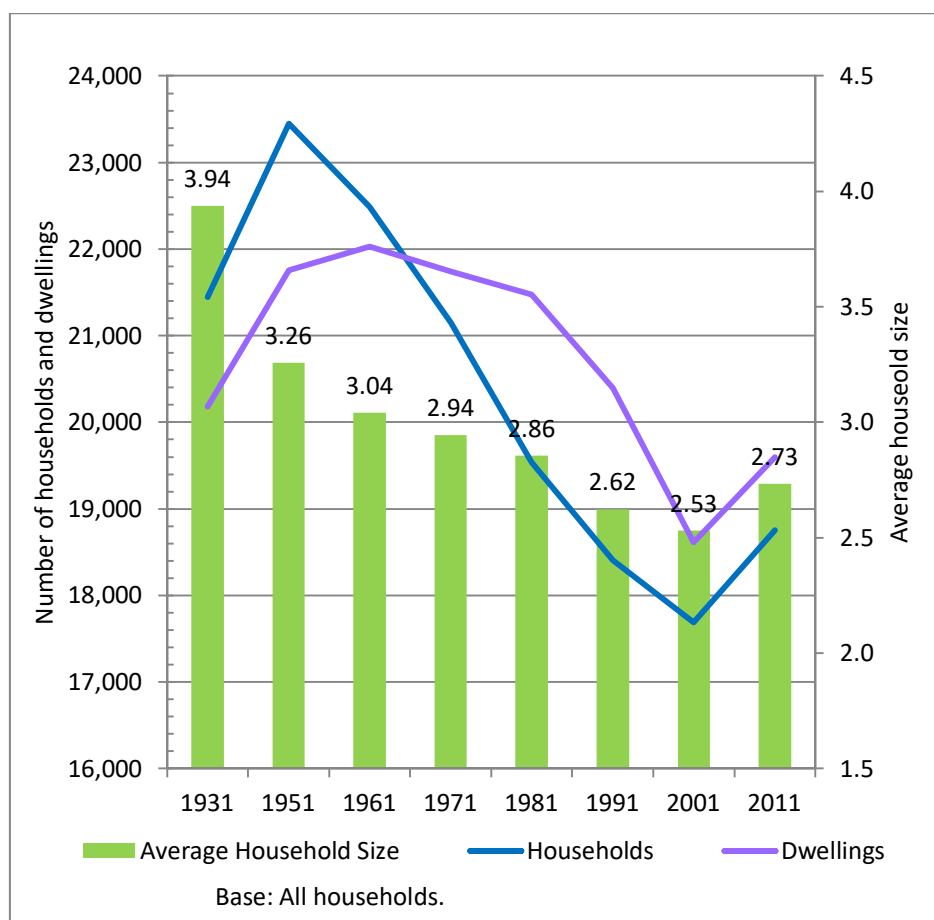
Year	Households	Base ^A	Source
1931	21,446	Private families	General Register Office, 'Census of England and Wales, 1931: County of Stafford (Part I)', 1935, Table 3.
1951	23,452	Private families	General Register Office, 'Census 1951 England and Wales: County Report—Staffordshire', Table 3.
1961	22,490	Private households	General Register Office, 'Census 1961 England and Wales: County Report—Staffordshire', Table 3.
1971	21,150	Households with residents	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1971 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table c71s15_032.
1981	19,537	Households with residents	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1981 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table 81sas121170.
1991	18,404	Households enumerated or absent (1991 population base)	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1991 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table S270031.
2001	17,692	All households	Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2001 England and Wales: Key Statistics', Table KS0200001.
2011	18,753	Household spaces with at least one usual resident	Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2011 England and Wales: Key Statistics', Table KS401EW.

^A Matched to 1928 County Borough area.

Note: Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0.

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Figure 5: Household Size and Household and Dwelling totals, Historic Smethwick, 1931 to 2011



Source: See Table 6 for population denominator, and Table 7 for household and Table 10 for dwelling totals and data sources.

Note: Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0.

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Table 8: Population of historic Smethwick wards, 1921 to 2011

Year	Bearwood	Cape	Sandwell	Soho	Spon Lane	Uplands	Victoria	Warley Woods	Smethwick Total
1921	9,321	11,631	11,546	10,863	12,505	8,424	11,470	6,363	82,123
1931	7,913	9,598	10,754	9,328	13,840	10,935	9,561	12,477	84,406
1951	6,544	8,357	8,503	7,112	12,066	9,822	7,523	16,480	76,407
1961	5,704	7,762	7,589	5,648	10,983	8,595	7,776	14,333	68,390
1971	5,255	7,749	5,028	6,023	11,099	8,107	6,522	12,470	62,254
1981	4,897	7,158	3,982	4,991	10,090	7,481	5,459	11,735	55,793
1991	4,414	6,149	2,612	4,095	9,430	6,792	3,462	11,336	48,291
2001	4,409	4,927	3,164	3,333	8,071	6,551	3,155	11,158	44,770
2011	4,779	7,169	3,675	4,308	9,435	7,348	3,455	11,116	51,285

Base: Usual resident population.

Source: Table 2 to Table 5.

Note: Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

Table 9: Population Density, historic Smethwick wards, 1921 to 2011

Year	Bearwood	Cape	Sandwell	Soho	Spon Lane	Uplands	Victoria	Warley Woods	Smethwick Total
1921	59.4	60.9	28.1	48.5	24.3	33.0	65.2	11.2	32.9
1931	50.4	50.3	26.2	41.6	26.9	42.9	54.3	22.0	33.8
1951	41.7	43.8	20.7	31.8	23.4	38.5	42.7	29.1	30.6
1961	36.3	40.6	18.5	25.2	21.3	33.7	44.2	25.3	27.4
1971	33.5	40.6	12.2	26.9	21.6	31.8	37.1	22.0	24.9
1981	31.2	37.5	9.7	22.3	19.6	29.3	31.0	20.7	22.4
1991	28.1	32.2	6.4	18.3	18.3	26.6	19.7	20.0	19.3
2001	28.1	25.8	7.7	14.9	15.7	25.7	17.9	19.7	17.9
2011	30.4	37.5	8.9	19.2	18.3	28.8	19.6	19.6	20.5
Acreage	157	191	411	224	515	255	176	567	2,496

Base: Usual resident population per acre.

Source: See Table 2 and Table 5.

Note: Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

Note: This table supports Figure 3.8 and Figure 5.23 in Chapters 3 and 5.

6. Housing data for Smethwick

This technical note outlines the basis of the housing stock data used in the thesis for Smethwick. For data covering 1971 to 2011, the census apportionment method outlined in Special Note 5 is used to calculate figures for historic Smethwick and its constituent wards. Table 10 outlines the total dwellings count, which peaked at 22,027 units in 1971. The equivalent ward-level data is provided at Table 11. Vacancy rates are detailed in Table 12 for historic Smethwick and Salford, peaking in both areas in 1991. Household tenure has been recorded in the census since 1961 (Table 13). Figure 6 charts the ward-level decline and recovery of private renting in Smethwick since 1971, particularly in Bearwood.

Table 10: Dwellings total in historic Smethwick area, 1831–2011

Year	1898 area	1928 extension (Warley Woods)	Historic Smethwick area (1928 area)	Base	Source
1831	540	35	575	Inhabited and uninhabited houses	Census Office, 'Census of Great Britain, 1831: Abstract of the Answers and Returns—Enumeration Abstract Vol II', 588.
1841	1,027	37	1,064	Inhabited and uninhabited houses	General Register Office, 'Census of Great Britain, 1841: Abstract of the Answers and Returns—Enumeration Abstract, MDCCCXLI', 289.
1851	1,783	37	1,820	Inhabited and uninhabited houses	General Register Office, 'Census of Great Britain, 1851: Population Tables—Appendix I Ecclesiastical Divisions of England and Wales', 17.
1861	2,808	39	2,847	Inhabited and uninhabited houses	General Register Office, 'Census of Great Britain, 1861: Population Tables—Numbers and Distribution of the People of England and Wales—Volume 1', Table A, 483.
1871	3,455	41	3,496	Inhabited and uninhabited houses	General Register Office, 'Census of Great Britain, 1871: Population Tables—Area, Houses and Inhabitants—Volume 1 Counties', Table 9, 349.
1881	4,963	43	5,006	Inhabited and uninhabited houses	General Register Office, 'Census of Great Britain, 1881: Volume II—Area, Houses and Population—Registration Counties', Table 5, 359.
1891	7,462	50	7,512	Inhabited and uninhabited houses	General Register Office, 'Census of Great Britain, 1891: Area, Houses and Population—Vol. II Registration Areas and Sanitary Districts', Table 4, 581.
1901	11,732	103	11,835	Inhabited and uninhabited houses	General Register Office, 'Census of England and Wales, 1901: County of Stafford—Area, Houses and Population', Table 9, 16.
1911	15,379	1,354	16,733	Inhabited and uninhabited houses	General Register Office, 'Census of England and Wales, 1911: Area, Families or Separate Occupiers, and Population—Volume VI Buildings of Various Kinds', Table 2.
1921	15,505	1,447	16,952	All dwellings occupied and vacant	General Register Office, 'Census of England and Wales, 1921: County of Stafford', Table 10.
1931	17,116	3,064	20,180	All dwellings occupied and vacant	General Register Office, 'Census of England and Wales, 1931: County of Stafford (Part I)', 1935, Table 10.
1945	17,163 ^A	4,237 ^A	21,400 ^A	Local Rating Office data	West Midland Group, <i>Conurbation: A Survey of Birmingham and the Black Country</i> , Table XIII, 92.

Year	1898 area	1928 extension (Warley Woods)	Historic Smethwick area (1928 area)	Base	Source
1951	17,355	4,400	21,755	All dwellings occupied and vacant	General Register Office, 'Census 1951 England and Wales: County Report— Staffordshire', Table 10.
1961	17,559	4,468	22,027	All dwellings occupied and vacant	General Register Office, 'Census 1961 England and Wales: County Report— Staffordshire', Table 11.
1971	17,247	4,491	21,738	All dwellings occupied and vacant	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1971 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table c71s16 039+40
1981	16,895	4,580	21,475	All dwellings occupied and vacant	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1981 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table 81sas111149
1991	15,736	4,658	20,394	All dwellings occupied and vacant	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1991 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table S610001.
2001	13,935	4,678	18,613	All dwellings occupied and vacant	Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2001 England and Wales: Key Statistics', Table KS0160001+2
2011	14,950	4,647	19,597	All dwellings occupied and vacant	Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2011 England and Wales: Key Statistics', Table KS401EW.

^A To obtain a 1945 figure for the Warley Woods extension, new-build (160) and temporary prefabricated (54) units built in 1945–50 were subtracted from the 4,451 ward dwellings in 1951. The resulting figure of 4,237 was subtracted from the Rating Office estimate for Smethwick to derive a stock figure for the 1898 Smethwick area. Note: Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

Table 11: Dwellings total in historic Smethwick wards, 1931 to 2011

	Bearwood	Cape	Sandwell	Soho	Spon Lane	Uplands	Victoria	Warley Woods	Total	Base
1921	4,575 ^A		2,110	2,096	2,545	1,732	2,269	1,447 ^B	16,774	Occupied dwellings ^C
	<i>4,628^A</i>		<i>2,135</i>	<i>2,120</i>	<i>2,575</i>	<i>1,752</i>	<i>2,295</i>		<i>16,952</i>	
1931	2,146	2,371	2,295	2,051	3,325	2,457	2,215	3,064	19,924	Occupied dwellings ^C
	<i>2,174</i>	<i>2,401</i>	<i>2,324</i>	<i>2,077</i>	<i>3,368</i>	<i>2,489</i>	<i>2,243</i>	<i>3,103</i>	<i>20,180</i>	
1951	2,131	2,411	2,222	1,966	3,517	2,715	2,145	4,400	21,507	Occupied dwellings ^C
	<i>2,156</i>	<i>2,439</i>	<i>2,248</i>	<i>1,989</i>	<i>3,558</i>	<i>2,746</i>	<i>2,170</i>	<i>4,451</i>	<i>21,755</i>	
1961	2,144	2,479	2,202	1,812	3,519	2,725	2,446	4,468	21,795	Occupied dwellings ^C
	<i>2,167</i>	<i>2,505</i>	<i>2,225</i>	<i>1,831</i>	<i>3,556</i>	<i>2,754</i>	<i>2,472</i>	<i>4,516</i>	<i>22,027</i>	
1971	2,225	2,531	1,493	2,164	3,582	2,829	2,422	4,491	21,738	All dwellings occupied and vacant
1981	2,186	2,526	1,255	1,980	3,445	2,913	2,590	4,580	21,475	All dwellings occupied and vacant
1991	2,108	2,490	886	2,021	3,375	2,939	1,917	4,658	20,394	All dwellings occupied and vacant
2001	2,171	1,878	1,149	1,467	2,857	2,897	1,516	4,678	18,613	All dwellings occupied and vacant
2011	2,250	2,467	1,190	1,448	3,125	3,054	1,417	4,647	19,597	All dwellings occupied and vacant

Source: Census of Population, 1921–2011 with applicable census table and volume cited in Table 2 and Table 5.

^A In 1928, Bearwood ward was split to create a new Cape ward, so the 1921 data is equivalent to the aggregate of the subsequent Bearwood and Cape wards.

^B 1921 data for Warley Woods is an estimate for all dwellings occupied and vacant. It did not form part of Smethwick until 1928, but is included here to enable comparison.

^C Otherwise ward-level census data for 1921–61 is available only for occupied dwellings. The second figure in italics in this period is therefore an estimate for all dwellings, derived from apportioning the overall Smethwick vacancy figure (see Table 12) by ward proportionately to the ward share of occupied dwellings. So Bearwood ward in 1931 accounted for 10.8 per cent of the Smethwick total and is therefore estimated to account for 10.8 per cent of 256 Smethwick vacancies (28, rounded) giving a stock estimate of 2,174. The Smethwick total in italics is consistent with Table 10. The higher (italicised) ward figure is used in the thesis to provide a consistently-based stock figure over the 1931 to 2011 period.

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Table 12: Vacancy rates in historic Smethwick and Salford, 1921 to 2011

Year	Bearwood	Cape	Sandwell	Soho	Spon Lane	Uplands	Victoria	Warley Woods	Smethwick Total	Historic Salford ^A	Source
1921	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1.15	1.34	General Register Office, 'Census of England and Wales, 1921: County of Stafford', Table 10. ^B
	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1.27	1.19	General Register Office, 'Census of England and Wales, 1931: County of Stafford (Part I)', 1935, Table 10. ^B
1951	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1.14	1.37	General Register Office, 'Census 1951 England and Wales: County Report—Staffordshire', Table 10. ^B
1961	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1.05	1.93	General Register Office, 'Census 1961 England and Wales: County Report—Staffordshire', Table 11. ^B
1971	4.23	3.36	5.60	3.56	3.54	3.55	5.29	1.51	3.51	5.92	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1971 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table c71s16_40.
1981	4.06	6.60	8.37	7.23	6.95	6.17	7.74	2.05	5.67	4.59	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1981 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table 81sas111156 +57 +58.
1991	6.62	17.91	7.81	21.54	7.55	4.53	19.47	3.24	9.82	11.32	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1991 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table S610029.
2001	3.80	3.88	6.14	14.43	3.16	1.94	13.21	1.63	4.62	6.53	Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2001 England and Wales: Key Statistics', Table KS0160002.
2011	6.09	4.04	4.85	3.64	4.38	2.67	2.55	4.14	4.05	6.62	Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2011 England and Wales: Key Statistics', Table KS401EW.

Base: Vacant dwellings as a proportion (%) of all dwellings (see Table 10).

^A The data source for Salford is the same as shown for Smethwick in the final column, except that for 1921–61 uses the equivalent county report (Lancashire), with table numbering being alike.

^B No ward-level data published.

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Note: This table supports Figure 4.6, Chapter 4.

Table 13: Housing Tenure in historic Smethwick, 1961 to 2011 (%)

	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Owner-occupied	37.2	41.0	48.5	56.4	59.3	51.7
Rented from council	24.8	37.5	40.1	31.4	21.1	19.1
Rented from housing association ^A	—	—	1.0	3.7	6.1	7.1
Rented from a private landlord or lettings agency	34.1	21.5	9.8	7.4	8.8	18.5
Rented with a job or business, or other rented	3.9	0.0	0.7	1.0	4.7	3.6

Base: Tenures as a proportion (%) of all households (see Table 7).

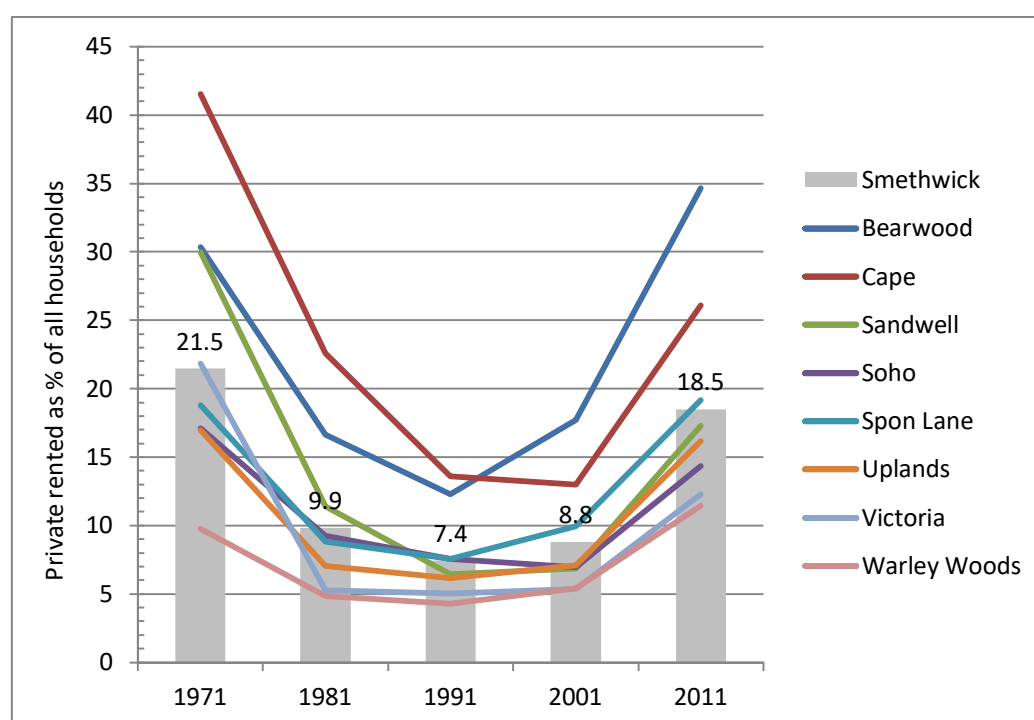
^A No data available for housing associations for 1961 and 1971.

Source: General Register Office, 'Census 1961 England and Wales: County Report—Staffordshire, Table 15; Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1971 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', SAS Table 19; OPCS, 'Census 1981 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', SAS Table 10; OPCS, 'Census 1991 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', SAS Table 20; Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2001 England and Wales: Key Statistics', Table KS18; ONS, 'Census 2011 England and Wales: Key Statistics', Table KS402EW.

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Note: This table supports Figure 6 in Chapter 6.

Figure 6: Private Renting in Historic Smethwick wards, 1971 to 2011

Base: Rented from a private landlord or lettings agency as proportion (%) of all households (Table 7).

Source: See Table 13.

Note: Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0.

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Note: This table supports Figure 6.1 in Chapter 6.

7. Comparative data for historic Salford

This technical note explains the population time-series and associated datasets comparable to Smethwick constructed for Salford. Historic data for 1801–51 is for the three townships of Salford, Pendleton and Broughton that formed Salford Borough from 1844. The period 1861–1971 then covers Salford Borough (later County Borough). Greenall’s study records population for the period 1801–1911 based on the census.⁸⁰ Data for 1921–31 and 1951–71 is derived from the equivalent census datasets for Smethwick. The National Register counted a 1939 civilian population for Salford of 166,386 which seems too low in light of the trend shown here, so the 1938 mid-year population estimate of 199,400 is used.⁸¹ Salford was considerably expanded in 1974 through local government reorganisation, when it became a metropolitan district. However, the outline of the former county borough area (‘historic Salford’) was maintained in the 1974 ward boundaries for metropolitan Salford (with the exception of some small localities transferred to Manchester). Data is therefore ward-based for 1981 and 1991 (see Table 14 and Table 15). Following further boundary changes after 1991, contemporary wards cannot be matched to historic Salford. For 2001 and 2011, small area data from the census has therefore been applied to the former county borough area, using the same apportionment approach taken to Smethwick and including the ex-Salford localities in Manchester. Table 16 shows the resulting population calculation for historic Salford for the period 1801 to 2011, inclusive.

⁸⁰ R. L. Greenall, *The Making of Victorian Salford* (Lancaster: Carnegie, 2000), 361.

⁸¹ General Register Office, 'National Register United Kingdom and Isle of Man: Statistics of Population on 29th September, 1939: By Sex, Age and Marital Condition—Report and Tables', [statistical report], London: HMSO, 1944, Table 1.

Table 14: Best-fit Salford 1981 wards for historic Salford

Zone ID	Zone Name	Ward name used in the 1977 Inner-Area Study ^A
03BRAf	No. 1	Kersal
03BRAG	No.7	Mandley Park
03BRAH	No.8	Albert Park
03BRAJ	No.9	St. Matthias, Trinity and Crescent
03BRAK	No.10	Regent and Ordsall Park
03BRAL	No.11	St. Pauls and Docks
03BRAM	No.12	Charlestown and St Thomas
03BRAN	No.13	Langworthy and Seedley
03BRAP	No.14	Weaste
03BRAQ	No.15	Claremont

Source: 'English Wards 1981—SN: 5819 UKBORDERS: Digitised Boundary Data, 1840– and Postcode Directories, 1980–', [SHAPE geospatial data], 2013: <<http://census.ukdataservice.ac.uk/get-data/boundary-data.aspx>> downloaded 4 March 2013.

^A Manchester and Salford Inner City Partnership Research Group, 'Manchester and Salford Inner Area Study', [government report], Manchester: Department of the Environment, North West Regional Office, 1978, frontispiece map.

Note: Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

Table 15: Best-fit Salford 1991 wards for historic Salford

Zone ID	Ward Name
03BRFB	Blackfriars
03BRFC	Broughton
03BRFE	Claremont
03BRFH	Kersal
03BRFJ	Langworthy
03BRFL	Ordsall
03BRFN	Pendleton
03BRFT	Weaste and Seedley

Source: 'English Electoral Wards 1991—SN: 5819 UKBORDERS: Digitised Boundary Data, 1840– and Postcode Directories, 1980–', [SHAPE geospatial data], 2013. <<http://census.ukdataservice.ac.uk/get-data/boundary-data.aspx>>, downloaded 4 March 2013.

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Table 16: Population for historic Salford, 1801 to 2011

Year	Population	Spatial area	Source
1801	18,088	1844 Borough	Census—R. L. Greenall, <i>Victorian Salford</i> , 361.
1811	24,744	1844 Borough	Census—R. L. Greenall, <i>Victorian Salford</i> , 361.
1821	32,600	1844 Borough	Census—R. L. Greenall, <i>Victorian Salford</i> , 361.
1831	50,810	1844 Borough	Census—R. L. Greenall, <i>Victorian Salford</i> , 361.
1841	68,026	1844 Borough	Census—R. L. Greenall, <i>Victorian Salford</i> , 361.
1851	84,773	1844 Borough	Census—R. L. Greenall, <i>Victorian Salford</i> , 361.
1861	101,752	1844 Borough	Census—R. L. Greenall, <i>Victorian Salford</i> , 361.
1871	124,801	1844 Borough	Census—R. L. Greenall, <i>Victorian Salford</i> , 361.
1881	176,233	1844 Borough	Census—R. L. Greenall, <i>Victorian Salford</i> , 361.
1891	198,139	1844 Borough	Census—R. L. Greenall, <i>Victorian Salford</i> , 361.
1901	220,957	1844 Borough	Census—R. L. Greenall, <i>Victorian Salford</i> , 361.
1911	231,357	1844 Borough	R. L. Greenall, <i>Victorian Salford</i> , 361.
1921	234,045	1844 Borough	General Register Office, 'Census of England and Wales, 1921: County of Lancaster, Table 2.
1931	223,438	1844 Borough	General Register Office, 'Census of England and Wales, 1931: County of Lancaster (Part I)', 1935, Table 2.
1938	199,400	1844 Borough	General Register Office, 'National Register United Kingdom and Isle of Man: Statistics of Population on 29th September, 1939: By Sex, Age and Marital Condition—Report and Tables', Table 1.
1951	178,194	1844 Borough	General Register Office, 'Census 1951 England and Wales: County Report—Lancashire, Table 2.
1961	155,090	1844 Borough	General Register Office, 'Census 1961 England and Wales: County Report—Lancashire, Table 2.
1971	131,006	1844 Borough	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1971 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table c71s01_032.
1981	96,528	1981 wards	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1981 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table 81sas020050.
1991	80,210	1991 wards	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1991 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table S010064.
2001	72,918 ^A	1844 Borough	Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2001 England and Wales: Key Statistics', Table KS0010001.
2011	86,812 ^A	1844 Borough	Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2011 England and Wales: Key Statistics', Table KS101EW.

Base: Usual resident population.

^A Estimated using census-apportionment method (Special Note 5).

Note: Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0.

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Table 17 provides a population change index for Smethwick and Salford based on 1951. Salford peaked earlier than Smethwick in 1921 and the index reached a nadir of 40.9 in 2001. Moreover, in eighty years the total population in the historic Salford area fell by 161,127 or –68.8 per cent.

Table 17: Total and indexed Population, historic Smethwick and Salford, 1801 to 2001 (1951 = 100)

	Resident population		Index	
	Smethwick	Salford	Smethwick	Salford
1801	1,265	18,088	1.7	10.2
1811	1,506	24,744	2.0	13.9
1821	2,125	32,600	2.8	18.3
1831	2,867	50,810	3.8	28.5
1841	5,220	68,026	6.8	38.2
1851	8,577	84,773	11.2	47.6
1861	13,567	101,752	17.8	57.1
1871	17,260	124,801	22.6	70.0
1881	25,225	176,233	33.0	98.9
1891	36,322	198,139	47.5	111.2
1901	55,186	220,957	72.2	124.0
1911	75,583	231,357	98.9	129.8
1921	82,123	234,045	107.5	131.3
1931	84,406	223,438	110.5	125.4
1938/9 ^A	78,290	199,400	102.5	111.9
1951	76,407	178,194	100.0	100.0
1961	68,390	155,090	89.5	87.0
1971	62,254	131,006	81.5	73.5
1981	55,793	96,528	73.0	54.2
1991	48,291	80,210	63.2	45.0
2001	44,770	72,918	58.6	40.9
2011	51,285	86,812	67.1	48.7

Base: Usual resident population.

^A Population year 1938 for Salford, 1939 for Smethwick.

Sources: See Table 2, Table 5, Table 16.

Note: Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0.

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A trend comparison for the housing stock count and household totals in Salford and Smethwick is presented in Table 18 and Table 23 for the period 1951 to 2001. Subsequent coverage includes employment levels and economic activity (Table 19 to Table 22) and deprivation (Figure 7 and Figure 8). It includes a wider contextual picture for the Manchester and Birmingham-centred conurbation cores.

Table 18: Change in Dwellings, historic Smethwick and Salford, 1951 to 2001

Year	Dwellings (units)		Index (total dwellings in 1951 = 100)		Source
	Smethwick	Salford	Smethwick	Salford	
1951	21,755	51,451	100	100	General Register Office, 'Census 1951 England and Wales: County Reports—Lancashire/Staffordshire', Table 10.
1961	22,027	50,008	101.3	97.2	General Register Office, 'Census 1961 England and Wales: County Reports—Lancashire/Staffordshire', Table 11.
1971	21,738	47,389	99.9	92.1	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1971 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table c71s16 039+40
1981	21,475	39,823	98.7	77.4	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1981 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table 81sas111149
1991	20,394	38,744	93.7	75.3	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1991 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table S610001.
2001	18,613	34,933	85.6	67.9	Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2001 England and Wales: Key Statistics', Table KS0160001+2
2011	19,597	42,140	90.1	81.9	Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2011 England and Wales: Key Statistics', Table KS401EW.

Base: All dwellings occupied and vacant.

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Table 19: Economic Activity, historic Smethwick and Salford, 1931 to 2011 (%)

	Employment rate		Unemployment rate		Source
	Smethwick	Salford	Smethwick	Salford	
1931	56.9	58.4	12.3	15.3	General Register Office, 'Census of England and Wales, 1931: Occupation Tables', Table 16.
1951	65.4	67.3	1.1	1.8	GRO, 'Census of England and Wales, 1951: Occupation Tables', Table 20.
1961	64.5	67.1	1.9	4.0	GRO 'Census 1961 England and Wales: Occupation Industry Socio-Economic Groups—Staffordshire', Table 1; GRO 'Census 1961 England and Wales: County Report—Lancashire', Table 6.
1971	61.8	58.3	3.4	8.4	'Census 1971 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', SAS Table 05 and SAS Table 07; OCPS, 'Census 1971 England and Wales: County Report—Lancashire Part I', Table 18; OCPS.
1981	54.2	49.1	16.6	16.2	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1981 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', SAS Table 05.
1991	47.7	44	15.9	18.2	OCPS, 'Census 1991 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', SAS Table 08.
2001	51.8	48.1	10.2	7.5	Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2001 England and Wales: Census Area Statistics', Table CS028.
2011	53.1	53.8	12.6	8.2	ONS, 'Census 2011 England and Wales: Key Statistics', Tables KS601–603EW.

Base: 1931 is 14+ population; 1951-71 15+ population; 1981-91 16+ population; 2001-11 16-74 population.

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Table 20: Indexed Employment change in historic Smethwick and Salford, 1971 to 2014 (1971 = 100)

Year	Smethwick total employment	Salford total employment	Smethwick manufacturing employment	Salford manufacturing employment	Data source	Spatial area
1971	100	100	100	100	CoE	1985 Job Centre area
1972	99.6	95.8	96.2	90.7	CoE	1985 Job Centre area
1973	102.4	99.6	94.8	92.8	CoE	1985 Job Centre area
1974	95.9	98.6	94.8	88.3	CoE	1985 Job Centre area
1975	95.7	98.5	91.1	85.9	CoE	1985 Job Centre area
1976	86.9	95.9	80.4	77.5	CoE	1985 Job Centre area
1977	98.0	94.9	87.2	79.3	CoE	1985 Job Centre area
1978	80.1	91.2	69.9	83.3	CoE	1985 Job Centre area
1981	56.7	79.9	42.4	55.2	CoE	1985 Job Centre area
1984	61.0	78.6	45.2	47.7	CoE	1991 frozen wards
1987	58.3	77.2	34.9	45.6	CoE	1991 frozen wards
1989	62.2	78.7	38.1	44.1	CoE	1991 frozen wards
1991	60.6	73.1	32.0	30.5	AES	1991 frozen wards
1993	56.2	78.4	24.1	30.1	AES	1991 frozen wards
1995	53.1	92.6	18.6	32.2	AES	1991 frozen wards
1996	60.2	86.0	26.4	33.9	AES	1991 frozen wards
1997	57.8	99.4	23.4	36.3	AES	1991 frozen wards
1998	59.0	94.4	22.6	31.8	ABI	1991 frozen wards
1999	59.3	103.7	23.7	26.6	ABI	1991 frozen wards
2000	57.8	105.9	21.7	30.6	ABI	1991 frozen wards
2001	57.3	101.2	20.6	26.3	ABI	1991 frozen wards
2002	61.3	108.1	23.4	25.3	ABI	1991 frozen wards
2003	59.6	108.9	23.7	24.6	ABI	Lower Super Output Area
2004	58.3	110.7	19.4	24.1	ABI	Lower Super Output Area

Year	Smethwick total employment	Salford total employment	Smethwick manufacturing employment	Salford manufacturing employment	Data source	Spatial area
2005	61.1	110.9	19.7	18.8	ABI	Lower Super Output Area
2006	60.5	111.2	19.2	18.5	ABI	Lower Super Output Area
2007	58.4	112.0	18.3	18.3	ABI	Lower Super Output Area
2008	60.1	116.6	16.7	14.9	BRES	Lower Super Output Area
2009	55.4	117.8	15.3	13.4	BRES	Lower Super Output Area
2010	52.9	124.5	16.1	12.4	BRES	Lower Super Output Area
2011	47.4	125.1	15.3	14.4	BRES	Lower Super Output Area
2012	48.6	120.0	13.0	13.0	BRES	Lower Super Output Area
2013	48.2	123.5	14.2	13.5	BRES	Lower Super Output Area
2014	50.9	124.6	15.9	12.6	BRES	Lower Super Output Area

Base: Employees aged 16 years or over that an organisation directly pays from its payroll(s), in return for carrying out a full-time or part-time job or being on a training scheme. Excludes voluntary workers, self-employed, working owners who are not paid via PAYE.

Source: Office for National Statistics, 'Census of Employment: 1971–78, 1981–2, 1984, 1987 and 1989'; ONS, 'Annual Employer Survey: 1991, 1993, and 1995–7'; ONS, 'Annual Business Enquiry: 1998–2007'; ONS, 'Business Register and Employment Survey: 2008–14', all data from <<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/default.asp>> accessed 10 February 2015. Data sources are also discussed in Special Note 5.

Note: Contains data licensed by ONS under the Open Government Licence v3.0 and supplied through ONS primary user notice NTC/BRES13-P0567, via NOMIS official labour market statistics.

Table 21: Indexed Employment change in Birmingham, Sandwell, Salford and Manchester, 1971 to 2014

Year	Birmingham	Sandwell	Manchester	Post-1974 Salford
1971	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1972	96.0	100.2	98.4	95.6
1973	95.4	104.5	97.6	99.5
1974	96.1	102.5	96.7	93.9
1975	93.3	102.9	95.7	95.6
1976	90.0	99.2	93.5	93.0
1977	90.4	100.4	96.5	90.5
1978	91.9	97.4	93.7	91.9
1981	80.4	81.3	86.0	79.0
1984	76.4	72.3	78.3	75.5
1987	74.5	71.0	82.5	76.0
1989	75.8	74.8	79.2	78.3
1991	74.9	72.2	77.2	74.2
1993	69.5	66.0	73.6	75.8
1995	75.0	69.5	74.8	87.1
1996	74.9	70.6	72.8	86.0
1997	75.6	71.5	77.0	90.9
1998	75.7	71.2	77.7	85.9
1999	77.8	72.1	81.5	92.2
2000	76.9	70.2	83.0	94.1
2001	78.0	70.2	84.9	91.1
2002	78.0	72.7	87.9	96.6
2003	78.8	70.1	88.2	95.6
2004	79.4	68.7	90.4	98.0
2005	80.0	69.2	88.1	97.6
2006	77.8	71.1	88.6	96.8
2007	77.5	71.5	88.9	98.1
2008	79.4	72.9	89.3	99.9
2009	74.0	69.3	89.7	98.3
2010	73.7	68.2	89.7	98.8
2011	75.2	65.5	89.8	98.5
2012	74.9	68.6	92.4	97.0
2013	77.1	68.6	95.9	99.3
2014	79.1	71.6	97.6	100.5

Base: Employees aged 16 years or over that an organisation directly pays from its payroll(s), in return for carrying out a full-time or part-time job or being on a training scheme. Excludes voluntary workers, self-employed, working owners who are not paid via PAYE.

Source: Office for National Statistics, 'Census of Employment: 1971–78, 1981–2, 1984, 1987 and 1989'; ONS, 'Annual Employer Survey: 1991, 1993, and 1995–7'; ONS, 'Annual Business Enquiry: 1998–2007'; ONS, 'Business Register and Employment Survey: 2008–14', all data from <<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/default.asp>> accessed 10 February 2015. Data sources are also discussed in Special Note 10.

Note: Contains data licensed by ONS under the Open Government Licence v3.0 and supplied through ONS primary user notice NTC/BRES13-P0567, via NOMIS official labour market statistics.

Table 22: Share of Employment in historic Smethwick and Salford, 1971 (%)

	Smethwick	Salford
Industrial Groups (SIC 1968)		
01 : Agriculture, forestry, fishing	0.0	0.0
02 : Mining and quarrying	0.0	0.1
03 : Food, drink and tobacco	9.2	3.0
04 : Coal, petroleum and chemical products	0.1	2.8
05 : Metal manufacture	19.1	0.2
06 : Engineering and allied trades	42.8	11.5
07 : Textiles, leather and clothing	1.5	9.9
08 : Other manufacturing	4.0	8.1
09 : Construction	0.7	5.4
10 : Gas, electricity and water	0.2	0.8
11 : Transport and communication	2.6	15.6
12 : Distributive trades	8.1	10.2
13 : Financial, professional, miscellaneous	9.0	25.6
14 : Public administration and defence	2.6	6.8
Total	100	100
Divisions (SIC 1968)		
1 : Primary industries	0.0	0.1
2 : Gas, electricity and water	0.2	0.8
3 : Manufacturing industries	76.7	35.4
4 : Construction	0.7	5.4
5 : Distributive trades	8.1	10.2
6 : Transport/communication, banking, finance	6.2	32.3
7 : Public administration and defence	2.6	6.8
8 : Miscellaneous services	5.4	9.0
Total	100	100

Base: Employees aged 16 years or over that an organisation directly pays from its payroll(s), in return for carrying out a full-time or part-time job or being on a training scheme. Excludes voluntary workers, self-employed, working owners who are not paid via PAYE.

Source: Office for National Statistics, 'Census of Employment: 1971–78, 1981–2, 1984, 1987 and 1989'; ONS, 'Annual Employer Survey: 1991, 1993, and 1995–7'; ONS, 'Annual Business Enquiry: 1998–2007'; ONS, 'Business Register and Employment Survey: 2008–14', all data from <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/default.asp> accessed 10 February 2015. Data sources are also discussed in Special Note 10.

Note: Contains data licensed by ONS under the Open Government Licence v3.0 and supplied through ONS primary user notice NTC/BRES13-P0567, via NOMIS official labour market statistics.

Figure 7: Deprivation in Central Manchester and Salford, 2004

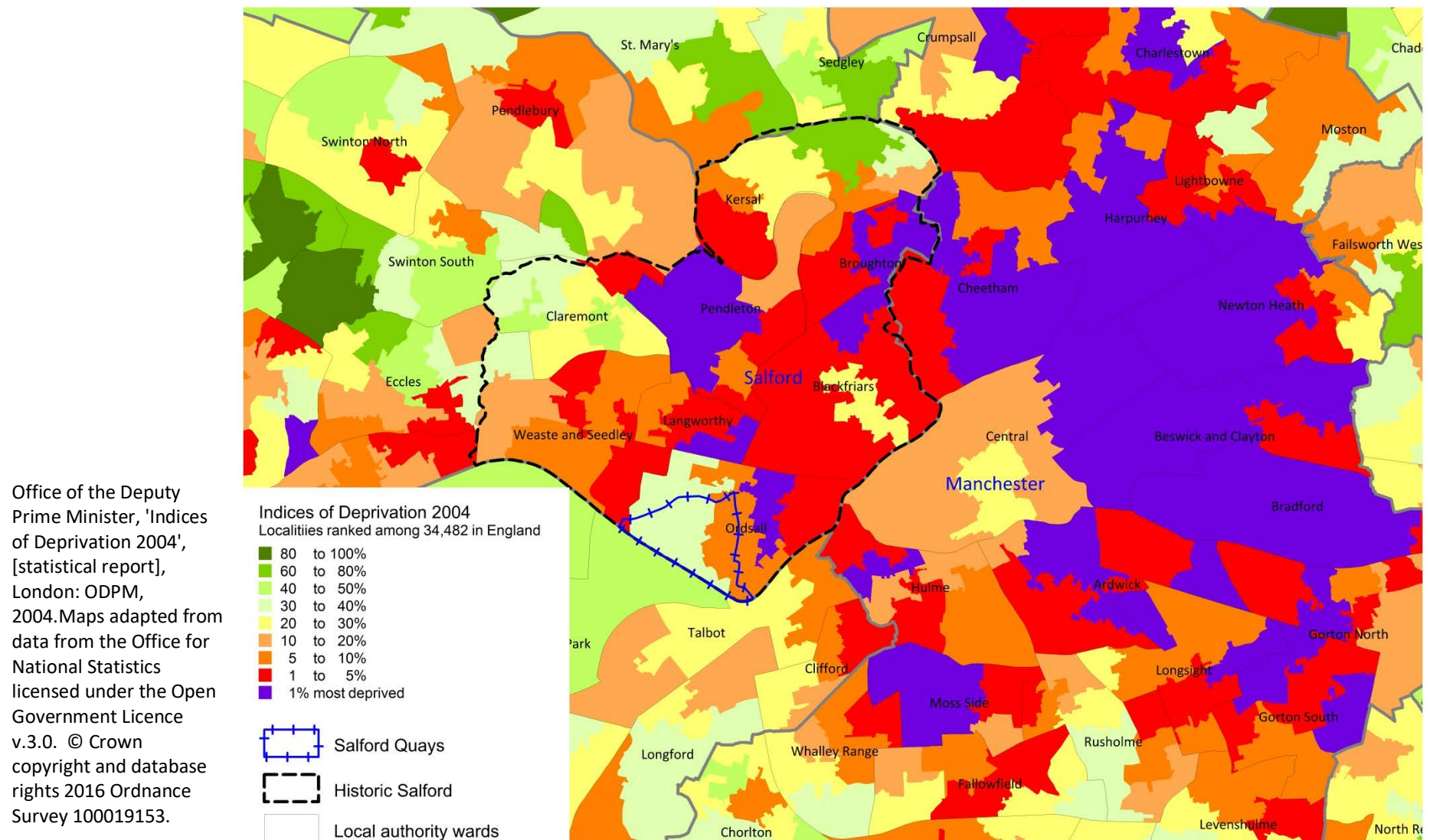
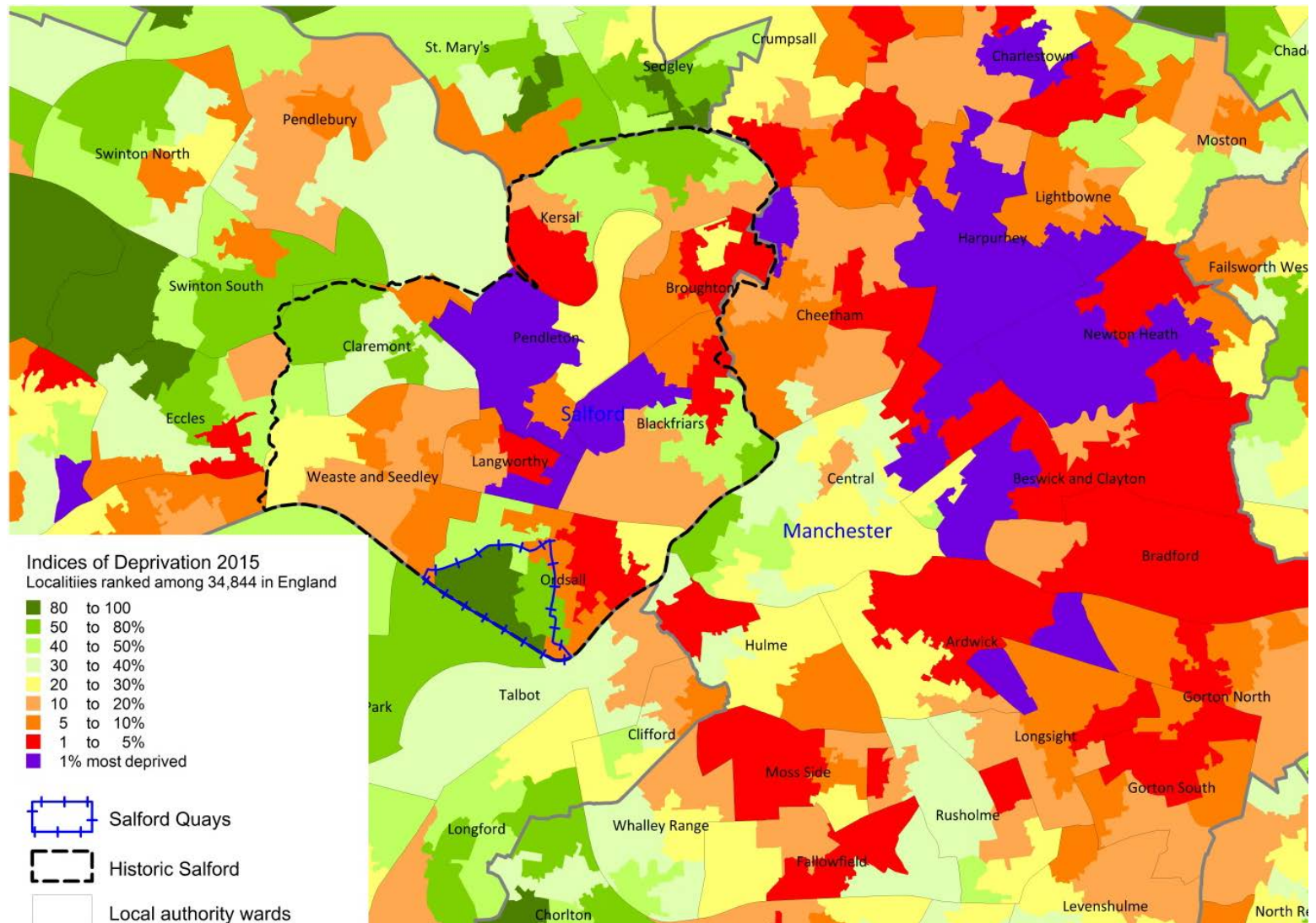


Figure 8: Deprivation in Central Manchester and Salford, 2015



Source: Department for Communities and Local Government, 'The English Indices of Deprivation 2015', [statistical report], London: CLG, 2015. Adapted from data from the Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

Table 23: Change in Households, historic Smethwick and Salford, 1951 to 2001

	Total households (units)		Average household size (persons) ^A		Households indexed (1951 = 100)		Source
	Smethwick	Salford	Smethwick	Salford	Smethwick	Salford	
1951	23,452	54,244	3.26	3.29	100	100	General Register Office, 'Census 1951 England and Wales: County Reports—Lancashire/Staffordshire', Table 3.
1961	22,490	49,928	3.04	3.11	95.9	92.0	General Register Office, 'Census 1961 England and Wales: County Reports—Lancashire/Staffordshire', Table 13.
1971	21,150	4,606	2.94	2.94	90.2	82.2	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1971 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table c71s15_032.
1981	19,537	6,333	2.86	2.66	83.3	67.0	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1981 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table 81sas121170.
1991	18,404	34,781	2.62	2.31	78.5	64.1	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1991 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table S270031.
2001	17,692	32,573	2.53	2.24	75.4	60.0	Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2001 England and Wales: Key Statistics', Table KS0200001.
2011	18,753	39,351	2.73	2.21	80.0	72.5	Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2011 England and Wales: Key Statistics', KS402EW.

Base: All households.

^A Total households divided by total population (denominator), using data from Table 6 and Table 16.

Note: Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

Comparison of successive government deprivation indices suggests a marked improvement in central Manchester and historic Salford from 2004 to 2015 (Figure 7 and Figure 8). A neighbourhood change typology developed by Hincks revealed that deprived neighbourhoods, particularly in the urban core, experienced sustained improvement over the period 2001 to 2007. He concluded that trends in the population and house price indicators and the associated patterns of change imply that deprived neighbourhoods in the urban core benefited from regeneration funding—whether directly or indirectly—and from positive externalities associated with a growing city-centre-focused local economy that was well connected into a prospering national economy.⁸² Certainly, deprived neighbourhoods in Greater Manchester have been targeted through decades of regeneration funding, including £1.3 billion of central government funding through City Challenge and the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) in the 1990s, New Deal for Communities (NDC), the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF), and Housing Market Renewal (HMR) during the 2000s. More than half was directed into Manchester and Salford.⁸³ His analysis also cautioned against an overreliance on static indices to measure deprivation which can conceal complexities in the ways in which deprived neighbourhoods change, owing to their variable structures and contexts.⁸⁴

⁸² Stephen Hincks, 'Neighbourhood Change and Deprivation in the Greater Manchester City-Region', *Environment and Planning A*, 47 (2015), 430–49, 442.

⁸³ Hincks, 'Neighbourhood Change and Deprivation', 442.

⁸⁴ Hincks, 'Neighbourhood Change and Deprivation', 430.

8. Postwar Population change in English Urban Areas

This technical note provides contextual data which locates population change in Smethwick and Salford within the wider pattern of English urban areas. Comparative data for the 1951 to 2001 needs to take account of boundary changes resulting from local government reorganisation. The calculation for the 2001 population shown in Table 24 is therefore based on a ‘best-fit’ of census output areas (the smallest 2001 census geography), where the population centroid for the output area falls within the 1951 local authority area boundary. For Smethwick and Salford, the slightly more accurate census apportionment outlined in Special Note 5 is used to make the data consistent with population data cited elsewhere in the thesis.⁸⁵

Table 24: Population change in historic English county borough areas outside London, 1951 to 2001

1951 local authority area	Area in acres	Population 1951	Population 2001	% change 1951–2001 (ranked)
<i>Salford</i>	5,202	178,194	72,918	-59.1
Liverpool	29,246	788,659	442,059	-43.9
Manchester	27,222	703,082	398,828	-43.3
Gateshead	4,593	115,039	66,142	-42.5
<i>Smethwick</i>	2,496	76,407	44,770	-41.4
Preston	5,898	119,250	71,490	-40.1
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	11,654	291,724	181,821	-37.7
Warrington	4,398	80,694	50,319	-37.6
Bootle	3,245	74,977	49,218	-34.4
Derby	8,371	141,267	94,679	-33.0
Birkenhead	9,111	142,501	100,977	-29.1
Hull	18,954	299,105	218,642	-26.9
Oldham	6,496	121,266	90,365	-25.5
Sunderland	9,331	181,524	136,325	-24.9
Sheffield	39,055	512,850	386,646	-24.6
West Hartlepool	4,659	72,662	55,711	-23.3
South Shields	5,795	106,598	81,748	-23.3

⁸⁵ As can be seen from Special Note 5, apportionment is a detailed and time-consuming process. At a wider urban scale of the 75 county boroughs listed here, the population-centroid method is sufficient. Thus applying this centroid rather than the apportionment method to Smethwick and Salford leaves their ranking unchanged at fifth and first respectively.

1951 local authority area	Area in acres	Population 1951	Population 2001	% change 1951– 2001 (ranked)
Burnley	4,763	84,987	65,221	-23.3
Nottingham	15,961	306,055	238,014	-22.2
Birmingham	51,756	1,112,685	870,059	-21.8
Dudley	3,981	62,526	49,602	-20.7
Portsmouth	11,536	233,545	185,601	-20.5
Wallasey	8,386	101,369	80,988	-20.1
Grimsby	5,915	94,557	77,023	-18.5
Wigan	5,059	84,560	69,011	-18.4
Wolverhampton	9,096	162,672	133,071	-18.2
St. Helens	8,339	110,260	90,495	-17.9
Stoke-on-Trent	21,634	275,115	226,990	-17.5
Halifax	13,919	98,404	81,426	-17.3
Bolton	15,270	167,167	138,825	-17.0
Barnsley	7,761	75,630	63,964	-15.4
Bristol	30,576	442,994	374,780	-15.4
Leeds	37,855	505,219	427,584	-15.4
York	6,660	105,371	90,415	-14.2
Tynemouth	5,269	66,564	57,543	-13.6
Blackburn	8,187	111,218	96,776	-13.0
Barrow-in-Furness	22,281	67,476	59,181	-12.3
West Bromwich	7,149	87,981	78,421	-10.9
Northampton	6,135	104,432	93,415	-10.5
Bath	5,005	79,294	71,162	-10.3
Plymouth	14,009	208,012	187,076	-10.1
Stockport	8,388	141,650	127,970	-9.7
Doncaster	8,317	82,054	74,763	-8.9
Great Yarmouth	4,672	51,105	47,288	-7.5
Norwich	9,318	121,236	113,006	-6.8
Blackpool	10,224	147,184	137,650	-6.5
Leicester	16,897	285,181	267,286	-6.3
Rotherham	9,338	82,341	77,508	-5.9
Lincoln	6,062	69,401	65,522	-5.6
Huddersfield	14,460	129,026	122,382	-5.1
Wakefield	5,501	60,371	58,215	-3.6
Bradford	25,537	292,403	283,808	-2.9
Burton-upon-Trent	4,227	49,167	47,760	-2.9
Gloucester	5,600	67,280	65,375	-2.8
Brighton	13,376	156,486	152,556	-2.5
Darlington	6,512	84,886	83,190	-2.0
Walsall	8,952	114,535	112,339	-1.9
Southampton	11,230	178,343	175,487	-1.6
Dewsbury	6,679	53,487	53,093	-0.7
Chester	4,237	48,237	47,914	-0.7
Carlisle	6,341	67,798	68,427	0.9
Southend-on-Sea	17,356	151,806	158,550	4.4
Oxford	8,352	98,684	104,042	5.4
Southport	17,671	84,039	90,336	7.5

1951 local authority area	Area in acres	Population 1951	Population 2001	% change 1951– 2001 (ranked)
Rochdale	9,362	88,429	95,374	7.9
Ipswich	9,025	104,785	113,414	8.2
Coventry	18,952	258,245	280,749	8.7
Bury	7,468	58,838	64,275	9.2
Worcester	5,404	59,703	65,322	9.4
Bournemouth	11,589	144,845	163,323	12.8
Reading	8,923	114,196	130,796	14.5
Exeter	8,647	75,513	97,639	29.3
Hastings	7,826	65,522	85,029	29.8
Canterbury	4,552	27,795	36,204	30.3
Eastbourne	11,081	57,821	84,123	45.5
All County Boroughs	854,304	12,426,284	10,200,015	-17.9

Base: Usual resident population.

Source: General Register Office, 'Census 1951 England and Wales: General Report', Table 13; Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2001 England and Wales: Census Area Statistics', Table KS0010001; *English Local Government Districts 1951—SN: 5819 UKBORDERS: Digitised Boundary Data, 1840– and Postcode Directories, 1980–*, [SHAPE geospatial data], 2013.

Note: Adapted census and map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A UK Data Service product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

9. Smethwick as ‘the most heavily industrialised area in England’

This note supports the case made for Smethwick being, as Smethwick Corporation suggested, ‘probably the most heavily industrialised area in the whole of England’.⁸⁶ The Corporation’s 1959 industrial handbook opened with this bold declaration:

Many great names in the world of industry are to be found in Smethwick - GKN, Chance, Tangye, Phillips, and many others - carrying the name of the Borough to the ends of the world. How much of Smethwick’s total manufacturing effort goes for export would be difficult to say. But there’s no doubt that this town on the outskirts of Birmingham is one of the pillars supporting post-war England.⁸⁷

Adverts from some of these ‘great names’ are shown in Figure 9. The 1951 census showed Smethwick had the second highest proportion of manufacturing employment after Oldbury among 157 towns (see Table 1). It also had the fourth-highest jobs density (rate per acre)—behind only some London boroughs. In a town ranking which combined both these measures as an indicator of overall industrialisation, Smethwick was first in 1951, ahead of Acton and Stretford, study comparator Salford (ranked tenth) and adjacent Oldbury (fifteenth). To put Smethwick into perspective, however, had it been incorporated in the ‘Greater Birmingham’ expansion, it would have added only a further 6.9 per cent population and 7.5 per cent more jobs to Birmingham’s 1951 levels.

⁸⁶ Smethwick Corporation, ‘Smethwick Staffordshire—The Official Industrial Handbook’, [council report], Cheltenham: Ed. J. Burrow, 1959, 54.

⁸⁷ Smethwick Corporation, ‘Industrial Handbook (1959 edn.)’, 1.

Figure 9: Smethwick 'Great Names of Industry', 1950s



'Smethwick "Great Names of Industry", 1950s', from Smethwick Corporation, Smethwick Staffordshire: The Official Industrial Handbook, 1959, *Passim*. © Burrows Communications Ltd. Reproduced with permission of Burrows Communications: Olivia Eisinger, 15 February 2016.

10. Employment data for Smethwick

This technical note explains the source and methodology for the local employment time series produced for Smethwick (and Salford). The postwar baseline includes a range of possibilities. Mann's study cited a jobs total in Smethwick of 50,000 using data released by the Ministry of Labour for 1949, based on company statistical returns.⁸⁸ The supporting statement for the Smethwick Development Plan also used Ministry of Labour data, which indicated 57,504 jobs in 1951, with 85.8 per cent in manufacturing.⁸⁹ However, this latter figure appears implausibly high, given previous and subsequent totals and the known workforces of the largest firms (Table 25). Alternatively, the decennial census asked households about place of work, and is a data source which enables direct comparison between local authority areas. The census found a lower employment level in Smethwick in 1951 of 47,351 (75.1 per cent in manufacturing).⁹⁰ Total and manufacturing employment figures derived from Ministry of Labour returns for 1960, 1966 and 1970 are from the Warley Structure Plan.⁹¹ The Smethwick company-level employment data for 1962 cited in Chapter 3 is from Price.⁹² For 1971 onwards, it is for both Smethwick and Salford from

⁸⁸ Margaret B. Mann, 'Smethwick: A geographical study of land utilisation, 1800–1950', unpublished BA dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1950, Appendix II.

⁸⁹ Smethwick Corporation, 'Written Statement to accompany Town Map', [council report], *County Borough of Smethwick Development Plan*, Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1951.

⁹⁰ General Register Office, 'Census 1951 England and Wales: Report on Usual Residence and Workplace', [statistical report], London: HMSO, 1956, Table 5. Note: Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

⁹¹ Warley Corporation, 'Report of Survey: Employment and Industry', [council report], *Warley Structure Plan*, Smethwick: Warley Corporation, 1973, Table 9 employees in employment Warley employment exchange areas 1960–70.

⁹² Geoffrey Price, 'Smethwick: The evolution and modern character of an industrial county borough', unpublished BA dissertation, University of Leicester, 1963, Appendix II.

successive employer surveys conducted by the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI) and equivalent government departments.⁹³

Table 25: Employment change at Large Smethwick Manufacturers, 1949 and 1962

Company	Principal product	1949 Mann Study ranked	1962 Price Study	% Change
W. & T. Avery Ltd.	Weighing machines, physical testing equipment	4,618	4,200	-9.1
Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds Ltd.	Screws, nuts, bolts and rivets	4,205	4,020	-4.4
Birmingham Railway Carriage & Wagon Co. Ltd.	Railway rolling stock	3,224	395	-87.7
J. A. Phillips & Co. Ltd.	Cycles and cycle components	2,832	2,800	-1.1
Chance Brothers Ltd.	Optical, scientific, roofing and pressed glass	2,365	1,899	-19.7
Henry Hope & Sons Ltd.	Heating and ventilating engineers	2,030	1,600	-21.2
Mitchells & Butlers Ltd.	Brewers	1,901	1,970	3.6
Birmid—Midland Motor Cylinder Co. Ltd.	Grey-iron castings	1,816	1,650	-9.1
Birmid—Birmingham Aluminium Casting Co Ltd.	Aluminium and magnesium foundries	1,529	1,500	-1.9
Tangyes Ltd.	Engineers	1,125	1,000	-11.1
Scribbans Kemp Ltd.	Cake manufacturers	1,053	1,100	4.5
ICI Ltd. (later Yorkshire Imperial Metals)	Non-ferrous tubes	996	920	-7.6
Evered & Co. Ltd.	Non-ferrous tubes brass ware, plastics	805	730	-9.3
British Pens Ltd.	Pens and pressed parts	762	730	-4.2
Birmid—Dartmouth Auto Castings Ltd.	Ferrous castings	687	600	-12.7
Incandescent Heat Co. Ltd.	Heat treatment furnaces	585	470	-19.7
Chance Bros Ltd—Lighthouse Works	Lighthouse equipment	523	0	-100.0
Smethwick Drop Forgings Ltd.	Ferrous and light alloy drop forgers	474	550	16.0
Mansill Booth & Co Ltd	Non-ferrous pressings	407	360	-11.5

⁹³ Office for National Statistics, 'Census of Employment: 1971–78, 1981–2, 1984, 1987 and 1989'; ONS, 'Annual Employer Survey: 1991, 1993, and 1995–7'; ONS, 'Annual Business Enquiry: 1998–2007'; ONS, 'Business Register and Employment Survey: 2008–14', all data from <<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/default.asp>> accessed 10 February 2015 (also see Bibliography). This survey data was obtained from NOMIS under the terms of ONS primary user notice NTC/BRES13-P0567, granted to the author on 9 February 2015 for the purposes of the research. The confidential data has been appropriately aggregated and rounded to the nearest 100 to avoid potential disclosure of company-level data, as confirmed by ONS: ONS Labour Market Division, 'Re: Notice NTC/NBRES14 PO70', [personal communication to author], 28 September 2015.

Company	Principal product	1949 Mann Study ranked	1962 Price Study	% Change
New Conveyor Co. Ltd.	Conveyor machines equipment	397	230	-42.1
Edward Williams Ltd.	Cycle components	348	350	0.6
United Spring Co Ltd.	Spring makers and stampers	303	500	65.0
Cranford Manufacturing Co. Ltd.	Cycle mudguards, sheet metal work	275	200	-27.3
Carola Products Ltd.	Hair grips	252	200	-20.6
Worlds Wear Ltd.	Children's and ladies dresses	240	0	-100.0
District Iron and Steel Co. Ltd.	Steel rolling mills	239	210	-12.1
George Burn Ltd.	Ferrous and non-ferrous tubes	238	220	-7.6
Aga Heat Ltd.	Ovens and cookers	214	0	-100.0
Total		34,443	28,404	-17.5

Base: Workplace employees.

Source: Margaret B. Mann, 'Smethwick: A Geographical Study of Land Utilisation, 1800-1950', unpublished BA dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1950, 58; and Geoffrey Price, 'Smethwick: The Evolution and Modern Character of an Industrial County Borough', unpublished BA dissertation, University of Leicester, 1963), Appendix II.

Matching this employment data to historic Smethwick (and Salford) is complicated.

Data from company returns to the Ministry of Labour and its successor government

department was released for the Smethwick Employment Exchange area (EEA) from 1945 to c.1971. It appears the Smethwick EEA matched the Smethwick County Borough in 1963.⁹⁴

The spatial area of the Smethwick Job Centre data used for 1971–81 is unknown, but is likely to equate to the Smethwick EEA plus the 50 acres transferred from Birmingham in 1966 (see Figure 2). For 1984 to 2002, the data is based on the five wards which best-matched historic Smethwick from 1979 ('1991 frozen wards' in the NOMIS dataset—Figure 2).⁹⁵ From 2003–14, census super output area lower-layers (LSOA) are used and these closely relate to

⁹⁴ G. M. Lomas and P. A. Wood, *Employment Location in Regional Economic Planning: A case study of the West Midlands* (London: Frank Cass, 1970), 15.

⁹⁵ Wards are defined by the Local Government Commissions, and reviews take place on a rolling basis. ONS uses the wards in place at the time of the Census of Population as building blocks for other geographies. Currently, these are 1991 wards. These frozen wards allow the ONS to produce time series on a fixed geographic base.

historic Smethwick with the Birmingham additions.⁹⁶ Note that in the case of Salford, Job Centre data for 1971–81 covered the same area as historic Salford. For the period 1984–2007 data was based on best-fit 1981 and 1991 wards which also closely equated to historic Salford (see Special Note 7). From 2003–14 best-fit MSOA have been used, as with Smethwick.

For the first time since 1961, a resident-workplace figure can be derived from the 2011 census for the historic Smethwick area, using the apportionment method described in Special Note 5. This enables a proper comparison between 1951 and 2011, because it uses a common residence-workplace methodology and the calculation excludes the Birmingham additions. This matters because these 50 acres contained significant employment; some in plants that straddled the pre-1966 boundary, but also ex-Birmingham industrial areas like Anne Road and Downing Street. Yet the 2011 census suggested a workforce in Smethwick of 20,366.⁹⁷ While this represents a fall of 26,985 jobs since 1951 (–57 per cent) this was a higher figure than identified in the 2011 BRES data (18,200). This discussion underlines that longitudinal employment data should be treated with some caution. The long-term trend of deindustrialisation in Smethwick is, however, very clear.

⁹⁶ Super output areas (SOAs) are a geography created by ONS to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. The lower Layer (LSOA) have a minimum population 1,000; mean 1,500 and built from groups of OAs (typically 5) and constrained by the boundaries of the standard table (ST) wards used for 2001 Census outputs. There are 32,482 lower layer SOAs in England: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>.

⁹⁷ Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2011 England and Wales: Workplace Population', [statistical report], <<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/default.asp>>, [contains public sector information licensed by ONS under the Open Government Licence v3.0 via NOMIS official labour market statistics], accessed 28 January 2014, Table WP101EW.

11. Unemployment data for Smethwick

This technical note explains the source and methodology for the unemployment time series produced for Smethwick. Claimant unemployment data for 1946 to April 1966 is for the Smethwick Employment Exchange area (EEA)—see Special Note 10).⁹⁸ From May 1966 to August 1970 data is derived from the Warley EEA.⁹⁹ The Smethwick figure for this period is an estimate based on the Smethwick share of the Warley economically active population.¹⁰⁰ The 1972–82 data is for June of each year for the Smethwick Job Centre area.¹⁰¹ To fill the gap in the 1970–2 period, data from the 1971 census for the historic Smethwick area is used, applying the apportionment method outlined in Special Note 5.¹⁰² This was for April, not June, and calculated from a household survey response, not claimant counts. For 1983 to 2014, the data was based on claimant data published by ONS for the five wards which best-matched historic Smethwick from 1979 to 2003 (Figure 2).

⁹⁸ Ministry of Labour, 'Unemployment in the Principal Towns', [statistical report], *Ministry of Labour Employment Gazette*, London: HMSO, [data for Smethwick Employment Exchange Area—June 1946 to April 1966], Vol. LIV (54) issue 2 to LXXIV (74) issue 5.

⁹⁹ Ministry of Labour, 'Unemployment in the Principal Towns', [statistical report], *Ministry of Labour Employment Gazette*, London: HMSO, [data for Warley Employment Exchange Area—May 1966 to December 1967], Vol. LXXIV (74) issue 6 to LXXV (75) issue 12; Department of Employment and Productivity, 'Numbers Unemployed in the Principal Towns and Development Areas', [statistical report], *Employment and Productivity Gazette*, London: HMSO, [data for Warley Employment Exchange Area—January 1968 to August 1970], Vol. LXXVI (76) issue 1 to LXXVIII (78) issue 8.

¹⁰⁰ This is in turn based on an annualised figure derived from census change for Smethwick in 1961–71 and Warley in 1966–71: General Register, 'Census 1961 England and Wales: Occupation Industry Socio-Economic Groups—Staffordshire', Table 1; General Register Office, 'Sample Census 1966 England and Wales: County Report—Worcestershire', Table 14; GRO, 'Sample Census 1966 England and Wales: Economic Activity County Leaflet—Worcestershire', Table 1; Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1971 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', SAS Table 05 and SAS Table 07. Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

¹⁰¹ Office for National Statistics, 'Unemployment Claimant Count, 1971–2014', [statistical report], <<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/default.asp>>, [contains public sector information licensed by ONS under the Open Government Licence v3.0 via NOMIS official labour market statistics: data 1972–82 Job Centre; 1983–2014 ward-based], accessed 30 January 2015.

¹⁰² Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1971 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', SAS Table 05 and SAS Table 07. Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

Table 26: Unemployment in Smethwick, 1946 to 2014

Year	Claimant unemployed in June of each year (persons)	Spatial Area
1946	95	Smethwick EEA
1947	66	Smethwick EEA
1948	169	Smethwick EEA
1949	119	Smethwick EEA
1950	64	Smethwick EEA
1951	48	Smethwick EEA
1952	315	Smethwick EEA
1953	861	Smethwick EEA
1954	154	Smethwick EEA
1955	113	Smethwick EEA
1956	329	Smethwick EEA
1957	309	Smethwick EEA
1958	803	Smethwick EEA
1959	379	Smethwick EEA
1960	174	Smethwick EEA
1961	284	Smethwick EEA
1962	730	Smethwick EEA
1963	593	Smethwick EEA
1964	199	Smethwick EEA
1965	172	Smethwick EEA
1966	92	Estimated from Warley EEA
1967	1,085	Estimated from Warley EEA
1968	374	Estimated from Warley EEA
1969	304	Estimated from Warley EEA
1970	455	Estimated from Warley EEA
1971	1,022	Historic Smethwick area
1972	1,315	Smethwick Job Centre area
1973	722	Smethwick Job Centre area
1974	599	Smethwick Job Centre area
1975	977	Smethwick Job Centre area
1976	2,426	Smethwick Job Centre area
1977	2,179	Smethwick Job Centre area
1978	2,235	Smethwick Job Centre area
1979	2,162	Smethwick Job Centre area
1980	2,826	Smethwick Job Centre area
1981	5,986	Smethwick Job Centre area
1982	7,021	Smethwick Job Centre area
1983	6,770	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
1984	6,593	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
1985	6,308	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
1986	6,383	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
1987	5,546	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
1988	4,204	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
1989	3,012	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
1990	2,720	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
1991	3,563	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards

1992	4,293	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
1993	4,473	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
1994	4,219	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
1995	3,632	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
1996	3,489	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
1997	2,566	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
1998	2,213	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
1999	2,179	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
2000	2,109	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
2001	1,803	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
2002	1,731	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
2003	1,844	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
2004	1,668	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
2005	1,693	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
2006	1,867	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
2007	1,772	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
2008	1,729	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
2009	2,586	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
2010	2,620	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
2011	2,891	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
2012	2,845	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
2013	2,677	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards
2014	2,022	Best-fit 1991 frozen wards

Base: Claimant unemployed with the exception of 1971 based on census economic activity data

Source: See footnotes 95 to 100. Adapted data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0 and supplied through ONS primary user notice NTC/BRES13-P0567. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

Note: Supporting table for Figure 3.17, Chapter 3.

12. Takeover of Hope's and 'the unpleasant and unacceptable face of capitalism'

This note uses the case of Henry Hope and Sons to examine the controversy and consequences of business takeovers. Hope's and coincidentally Tangyes acclaimed their longstanding family ownerships in company histories published in 1957–8.¹⁰³ In 1965, Hope's merged with another family-run firm, its 'friendliest of rivals', Crittall Manufacturing

¹⁰³ Rachel E. Waterhouse, 'A Hundred Years of Engineering Craftsmanship: A short history tracing the adventurous development of Tangyes Limited, Smethwick 1857–1957', [research report], Smethwick: Tangyes, 1957, 108; Henry Hope and Sons, 'Hope's Windows: A short history of Henry Hope and Sons Ltd, 1818 to 1958', [research study], Smethwick: Henry Hope and Sons Ltd, 1958, 35.

based in Braintree, Essex.¹⁰⁴ This made Crittall-Hope the largest window manufacturer in the UK.¹⁰⁵ But profits dipped in difficult overseas conditions and only a limited rationalisation was undertaken of two still separate operations. The share price dropped sharply in market reaction.¹⁰⁶ Slater Walker, a recently-formed investment company and bank, announced its interest in acquiring Crittall-Hope on 24 April 1968.¹⁰⁷ Within days the release of further disappointing trading results sealed its fate and the Crittall-Hope Board capitulated on 29 May.¹⁰⁸ Hope's chairman recalled the price offered was attractive given recent performance, the family equity was insufficient to block the sale and no alternative buyer came forward.¹⁰⁹ In October, the new owners concentrated window production at Braintree. The Smethwick plant was sold and leased back from the new landlord for residual activity such as ventilation. Some 700 of the 1,600 workforce was immediately made redundant.¹¹⁰ Plant closure and cutting overhead costs soon doubled profits.¹¹¹ Crittall-Hope was combined in 1971 with Butterley Engineering and sold by Slater Walker to Norcross (another conglomerate) in 1974.¹¹² The business continued to be sold on with

¹⁰⁴ 'Crittall-Henry Hope merger plan', *Financial Times*, 24 February 1965; 'Any just cause or impediment?', *Financial Times*, 24 February 1965.

¹⁰⁵ 'Conglomerates—case for more mergers', *Financial Times*, 15 February 1969.

¹⁰⁶ 'Crittall-Hope Limited', *Financial Times*, 8 September 1967; Michael Hope, 'On being taken-over by Slater Walker', *The Journal of Industrial Economics*, 24/3 (1976), 163–79, 166.

¹⁰⁷ 'And out pops Jim-in-the-box', *Financial Times*, 26 April 1968.

¹⁰⁸ 'Crittall-Hope to start talks with Slater Walker soon', *Financial Times*, 8 May 1968; 'Slater Walker-Crittall', *Financial Times*, 29 May 1968.

¹⁰⁹ Hope, 'Slater Walker', 167–8.

¹¹⁰ 'Major work switch in Crittall reorganisation', *Financial Times*, 2 October 1968.

¹¹¹ 'Conglomerates', *Financial Times*. A later sympathetic account in *The Financial Times* described a 'sleepy business shaken into expansion by tough professional management': 'Why Slater is pulling out', *Financial Times*, 13 February 1974.

¹¹² 'First in, last out, at Slater Walker', *Financial Times*, 22 October 1971; 'Rationalisation programmes continue', *Financial Times*, 16 June 1974; 'The industry's line-up', *Financial Times*, 18 June 1976.

successive redundancies before the Smethwick plant was eventually closed by Tarmac in 1994.¹¹³

The rapid growth of Slater Walker through aggressive acquisition became associated with ‘asset-stripping’ of public companies through a sole focus on short-term profit.¹¹⁴

Slater Walker’s involvement in the subsequent Lonrho scandal was condemned in 1973 by Prime Minister Edward Heath as ‘the unpleasant and unacceptable face of capitalism’.¹¹⁵

Michael Hope later reflected on the ‘human distress which can be caused when a century-old business is taken over and its identity extinguished by financial interests . . . to get the greatest possible return on their invested capital’.¹¹⁶

13. Industrial Disputes at Birmid

Birmid was a symbol of industrial unrest in Britain in the 1960/70s. Frequent strikes—often through unofficial action by small groups of workers and sometimes with a race dimension—caused mass layoffs at Birmid and the wider motor industry. Twenty-five strikes at Birmid identified from TV news and newspaper coverage are listed in Table 27, although this is understood to be a very partial picture.

¹¹³ WMEB Consultants, ‘Redundancies and Jobs at Risk’, [research report], *Labour Market Briefing*, Birmingham: West Midlands Enterprise Board, 1986; Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, *Smethwick’s Industrial Heritage*, ed. David Bryant (Smethwick: Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, 2008), 99.

¹¹⁴ See comments in Parliament by Stan Newens about Slater Walker’s takeover of Crittall-Hope in a 1969 House of Commons debate on mergers and takeovers: UK Parliament, ‘Hansard HC’, [contains Parliamentary information licensed under the Open Parliament Licence v3.0], vol 779, col 852–940 7 March 1969.

¹¹⁵ UK Parliament, ‘Hansard, HC’, [contains Parliamentary information licensed under the Open Parliament Licence v3.0], vol 856, col 1241–4 15 May 1973.

¹¹⁶ Hope, ‘Slater Walker’, 179.

Table 27: Reported Strikes at Birmid, 1962–78

Date	Birmid Company ^A	Number on strike	Nature of dispute	Source
April 1962	Midcyl	50	Pay	'Vauxhalls Facing First Shut-Down since 1926', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 14 April 1962. 'Take It, Say the Unions', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 17 April 1962.
August 1965	Birmal	72	Pay	'BMC Accused over Strike', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 4 August 1965. 'Strike continuation at Smethwick factory', Midlands News, 4 August 1965 [Television news broadcast], < http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-04081965-strike-continuation-at-smethwick-factory/MediaEntry/8414.html > accessed 28 August 2014. 'Car Peace Offer to Employers', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 9 August 1965. 'Smethwick Strike', Midlands News, 10 August 1965 [Television news broadcast], MACE: < http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-10081965-smethwick-strike/MediaEntry/8450.html > accessed 28 August 2014. 'Pay Offer Ends £6m Stoppage', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 11 August 1965.
March 1966	Birmal	32	Pay	'Strike by 32 Men Makes 3,400 Idle', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 22 March 1966. 'Jack Scamp at Smethwick Council House', Midlands News, 23 March 1966 [Television news broadcast], MACE: < http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-23031966-jack-scamp-at-smethwick-council-house/MediaEntry/9094.html > accessed 28 August 2014. '3,000 Laid Off as Car Strikers Go Back', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 24 March 1966. 'Scamp Says No to Cash for 'Dirty' Work', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 20 April 1966.
January 1967	Birmal	50-64	Pay	'Strike Threat to BMC', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 10 January 1967. 'Full Stop for 850 BMC Men', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 19 January 1967. 'Strike by maintenance workers, Smethwick', Midlands News, 19 January 1967 [Television news broadcast], MACE: < http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-19011967-strike-by-maintenance-workers-smethwick/MediaEntry/10041.html > accessed 28 August 2014. '20,000 Laid Off . . . Union Backs 50 in Strike', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 21 January 1967. 'Strikers hold meeting in local pub', Midlands News, 25 January 1967 [Television news broadcast], MACE: < http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-25011967-strikers-hold-meeting-in-local-pub/MediaEntry/10061.html > accessed 28 August 2014. 'Rush to Save BMC Jobs', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 26 January 1967. 'Scamp Breaks Car Strike Deadlock', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 27 January 1967. 'Gunter Lets through Sixpence and Faces a Protest', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 8 February 1967.

Date	Birmid Company ^A	Number on strike	Nature of dispute	Source
November 1967	Birmal	—	—	'Strike at Birmingham Aluminium Castings', Midlands News, 10 November 1967 [Television news broadcast], MACE: < http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-10111967-strike-at-birmingham-aluminium-castings/MediaEntry/1339.html > accessed 28 August 2014.
August 1968	Birmal	8	Pay	'Women's Strike Hits BMC', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 16 August 1968. '1,000 Car Men Idle as Seven Women Walk Out', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 22 August 1968. 'Birmingham Aluminium Castings strike', Midlands News, 22 August 1968 [Television news broadcast], MACE: < http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-22081968-birmingham-aluminium-castings-strike/MediaEntry/12197.html > accessed 28 August 2014. 'Defiant Women Strikers Rattle the Tea Cups', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 23 August 1968.
November 1968	Midcyl	100 White 200 Asian Two strikes	Race	'White workers strike at Smethwick factory', Midlands News, 22 November 1968 [Television news broadcast], MACE: < http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-22111968-white-workers-strike-at-smethwick-factory/MediaEntry/12564.html > accessed 28 August 2014. 'Interview with shop steward, Smethwick', Midlands News, 27 November 1968 [Television news broadcast], MACE: < http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-27111968-interview-with-shop-steward-smethwick/MediaEntry/12580.html > accessed 28 August 2014. 'Now Asians Walk out at Race Row Factory', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 28 November 1968.
August 1969	Birmid Qualcast	250	Pay	'Birmid Strike Could Threaten Car Industry', <i>The Financial Times</i> , 25 August 1969 'Strike at the Birmid Qualcast foundry in Smethwick', Midlands News, 25 August 1969 [Television news broadcast], MACE: < http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/midlands-news-25081969-strike-at-the-birmid-qualcast-foundry-in-smethwick/MediaEntry/13618.html > accessed 28 August 2014.
January–February 1970	Darcast	24 Asian Then 200 Two strikes	Race, inter-union dispute	'Birmid Qualcast Waits for DEP Decision', <i>The Financial Times</i> , 21 January 1970. 'Race Board Call as Strike Spreads', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 27 January 1970. 'Motor Industry Disputes Continue to Subside', <i>The Financial Times</i> , 10 February 1970.
February 1970	Midcyl	400	Pay Unofficial	'Birmid Group Again Hit by Unofficial Strike', <i>The Financial Times</i> , 11 February 1970.
May 1970	Darcast	15	Pay Unofficial	'Components Threat', <i>The Financial Times</i> , 8 May 1970.
June 1970	Midcyl	400	Pay	'Motormen Go Back', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 15 June 1970.
June 1970	Midcyl	30	Pay	'Midland Cylinder Strikers Back as More Walk out', <i>The Financial Times</i> , 25 June 1970.
June 1970	Midcyl	17	Pay	'Midland Cylinder Strikers Back as More Walk out', <i>The Financial Times</i> , 25 June 1970.

Date	Birmid Company ^A	Number on strike	Nature of dispute	Source
September 1970	Midcyl	300	Layoff	'2,000 Idle', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 29 September 1970. 'Austin-Morris Output Hit by Lightning Strike', <i>The Financial Times</i> , 1 October 1970.
January 1971	Midcyl	300 and 2300 layoff	Pay Unofficial	'By Birmid Strikers', <i>The Financial Times</i> , 22 January 1971. 'Hopes Rise for End to Birmid Dispute', <i>The Financial Times</i> , 29 January 1971.
June 1971	Midcyl	70	Suspensions	'70 in Walk-Out', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 8 June 1971.
August 1971	Darcast	150	Management issue	'Strike Continues', <i>The Financial Times</i> , 4 August 1971.
August 1972	Midcyl	200	Unofficial	'Cylinder Works Strike Over', <i>The Financial Times</i> , 16 August 1972.
August 1972	Darcast	70 300 laid off	Pay Unofficial	'Cylinder Works Strike Over', <i>The Financial Times</i> , 16 August 1972.
August 1972	Midcyl	60 150 laid off	Pay Unofficial	'Cylinder Works Strike Over', <i>The Financial Times</i> , 16 August 1972.
July 1973	Midcyl	20 White	Race	'Supervisor in Asian Row Seeks Pay-Off', <i>Daily Mail</i> , 5 July 1973.
May-June 1974	Midcyl	400		'Midland Motor Cylinder factory, Smethwick', Midlands News, 19 June 1974 [Television news broadcast], MACE: < http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/atv-today-19061974-midland-motor-cylinder-factory-smethwick/MediaEntry/21439.html > accessed 28 August 2014.
November –December 1974	Midcyl	400	Pay	'Walk-out by Assemblers Halts Triumph Production', <i>The Financial Times</i> , 27 November 1974. 'Triumph Men Meet to Review Strike', <i>The Financial Times</i> , 9 December 1974.
July 1978	Midcyl	150		'Midland Motor Cylinder factory strike continues', Midlands News, 3 July 1978 [Television news broadcast], MACE: < http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/atv-today-03071978-midland-motor-cylinder-factory-strike-continues/MediaEntry/29159.html > accessed 28 August 2014.

^A The three Birmid companies were Birmingham Aluminium Castings ('Birmal'), Midland Motor Cylinder ('Midcyl'), and Dartmouth Auto Castings ('Darcast').

14. Smethwick Manufacturing in 2015

This note illustrates several flourishing firms operating in Smethwick in 2015. Despite deindustrialisation, manufacturing employment still accounted for nearly a quarter (24 per cent) of jobs in Smethwick; double the regional average in 2014 (Figure 10). Hadley Industries, which came to Smethwick in 1978, became the largest privately-owned cold steel manufacturer in Europe.¹¹⁷ Part of the old Birmid Group still traded as Darcast Crankshafts, at the former Tangye's site in Cornwall Road. It described itself as a world leader in the manufacture of cast crankshafts.¹¹⁸ Evered Industrial Products (EIP), which carried the remnants of Evereds and several other Smethwick firms, became German-owned Aurubis. After substantial capital investment around 2005 it left its historic Surrey Works for new premises in Rabone Lane.¹¹⁹ The prominent cycle saddle-maker, Brooks, remained in Downing Street having survived multiple changes in ownership.¹²⁰ Eclipse continued to make its distinctive watering cans in Bearwood.¹²¹ Smethwick-based Techniswage produced the stainless steel tubes for the Olympic cauldron at the London 2012 Games.¹²² According to the local MP, 2 Sisters Food employed 700 at a poultry plant at Bevan Way and national carrier DPD employed 1,200 (up from 700 in 2009) in logistics at Roebuck Lane, distributing mobiles and supplying Asda. When interviewed, Spellar also stressed the importance of

¹¹⁷ Hadley Group, 'News', [corporate website], <<http://www.hadleygroup.co.uk/News.aspx>>, accessed 13 September 2012.

¹¹⁸ Darcast Crankshafts Ltd, 'About Us: Heritage—A company with a great history', [corporate website], <<http://www.darcast.com/heritage.html>>, accessed 13 September 2012.

¹¹⁹ Aurubis, 'Company History', [corporate website], <<http://aurubis.co.uk/index.php?wcid=18&xcid=1&lang>>, accessed 14 September 2012.

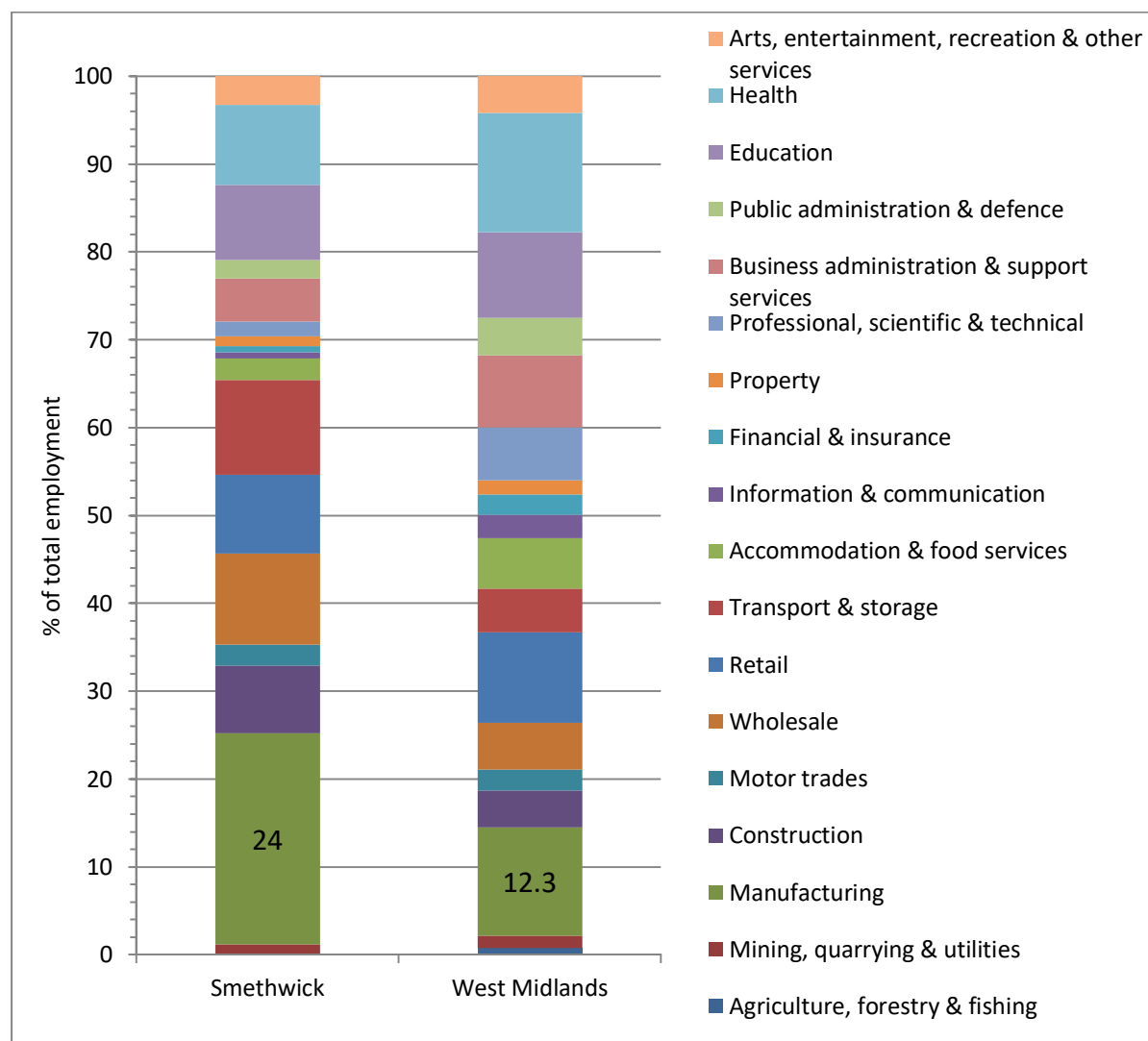
¹²⁰ Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, 'Industrial Heritage', 48-51.

¹²¹ Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, 'Industrial Heritage', 73-7.

¹²² 'Sales rise for Smethwick firm which helped make London 2012 Olympic flame', *Birmingham Post*, 13 April 2013.

West Bromwich Albion football club to the local economy and national recognition for the local area.¹²³

Figure 10: Employment by Industrial Group, Smethwick and West Midlands Region, 2014



Base: Employment by broad industrial group, 2007 standard industrial classification (SIC).

Source: Office for National Statistics, 'Business Register and Employment Survey: 2008–14', [statistical report], <<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/default.asp>>, [contains data licensed by ONS under the Open Government Licence v3.0 and supplied through ONS primary user notice NTC/BRES13-P0567 via NOMIS official labour market statistics], accessed 10 February 2015.

Note: Smethwick area based on best-fit MSOAs: soamid E02002065—Sandwell 023; soamid E02002068—Sandwell 026; soamid E02002070—Sandwell 028; soamid E02002073—Sandwell 031; soamid E02002076—Sandwell 034.

¹²³ John Spellar, 'Interview with Author', 21 June 2013.

15. Poverty in Sandwell and Birmingham, 1971 and 1991

This technical note explains the application of a study of by Dorling *et al*, which traced the changing geographies of poverty and wealth in Britain.¹²⁴ Using an established methodology—that used for the Breadline Britain indices—they constructed a coherent set of poverty measures for unchanging geographical areas at four dates. The Dorling work used geographies termed 'tracts' about half the size of a parliamentary constituency. With some assistance from Dorling, the author applied it at a smaller level (census EDs and OAs) to Birmingham and Sandwell. The maps in Chapter 3 show the second of Dorling's two indicators of poverty: the absolute measure ('core' poor). This was defined theoretically as people suffering from a combination of 'normative', 'felt', and 'comparative' poverty. It included people who are income poor (under 70 per cent of sample average), materially deprived (holidays, second-hand clothes and car, etc) and subjectively poor (they say they are). It should be noted that the core poor was a subset of Dorling's 'breadline' poor measure.¹²⁵

16. Ethnicity, Super-Diversity, Cohesion and Integration

This technical note defines the terminology used in the discussion of immigration as a driver of change in Smethwick. Since the 1980s, 'ethnicity' has increasingly been recognised as an appropriate term to differentiate between groups of people. Most definitions that exist categorise an ethnic group by reference to some combination of the following characteristics: language, religion, 'race', ancestral homeland, culture/way of life,

¹²⁴ Daniel Dorling, Jan Rigby *et al.*, 'Poverty, Wealth and Place in Britain, 1968 to 2005', [academic study], Bristol: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2007.

¹²⁵ Dorling, Rigby *et al.*, 'Poverty, Wealth and Place', 10-12.

geographical or national origin/s, or skin colour.¹²⁶ 'Super-diversity' is the concept or summary term introduced by Vertovec to address the changing nature of global migration that, over the past thirty years or so, has brought with it a transformative 'diversification of diversity'. This has not just been in terms of movements of people reflecting more ethnicities, languages and countries of origin, but also with respect to a multiplication of significant variables that affect where, how and with whom people live. These include: differential legal statuses and their concomitant conditions, divergent labour market experiences, discrete configurations of gender and age, patterns of spatial distribution, and the usually chequered responses by local authorities, services providers and local residents. The dynamic interaction of these variables is what is meant by super-diversity.¹²⁷

A Commission reporting in 2007 offered this explanation of 'integration and 'community cohesion' respectively:

We do not believe integration and cohesion are the same thing as some argue. Cohesion is principally the process that must happen in all communities to ensure different groups of people get on well together; while integration is principally the process that ensures new residents and existing residents adapt to one another. Different communities will have different relationships between existing residents; and differing levels of new residents arriving. So our view is that the two processes go on side by side, and that they interact with one another as local communities experience change and develop a shared future together. We also want to make clear that cohesion is not just about race and faith, and that integration in particular is not about assimilation.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Asif Afridi and Joy Warmington, 'The Pied Piper: The BME third sector and UK race relations policy', [academic study], Birmingham: Brap, 2009, 9.

¹²⁷ Steven Vertovec, 'New Complexities of Cohesion in Britain: Super-diversity, transnationalism and civil-integration', [academic study], Wetherby: Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007, 3.

¹²⁸ Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 'Our Shared Future', [opinion piece], *Final Report*, Wetherby: Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007, 9.

17. Social and Physical change in Marshall Street and West Smethwick

How Marshall Street became emblematic of ethnic shifts and race politics in 1960s' Britain is discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. Marshall Street was one of a number of predominantly BME localities in Smethwick by 1971 (Figure 11). In terms of postwar neighbourhood hierarchy, Marshall Street may have represented a mid-point of the Smethwick experience, between places like Bearwood and Soho. Yet the population shift occurred in an environment of accelerating economic change and wholesale neighbourhood redevelopment. This note and supporting maps from Figure 12 to Figure 14 examine this changing socio-spatial context.¹²⁹

The 1971 census did not record ethnicity, but in the Marshall Street locality, 54 per cent had been born in the UK, 34 per cent in India and 9 per cent in the Caribbean (none were from Pakistan).¹³⁰ However, this measure excluded second-generation BME residents, including children born in the UK, so by 1971 it may have been roughly fifty per cent BME. Severn agreed: 'If I picture Marshall Street at that time—I would have been seventeen—fifty per cent feels about right'.¹³¹ Forty years later, an estimated quarter (24 per cent) of population in the Marshall Street area was white; with Asian groups forming a majority.

¹²⁹ Alun Severn, 'Interview with Author', 29 January 2013.

¹³⁰ Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1971 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', [statistical report], <<http://casweb.mimas.ac.uk>>, [contains public sector information licensed by the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v3.0 via UK Data Service—Casweb], accessed 14 January 2014, Table SAS 08. Census data is available at locality-level (enumeration district) only from 1971 onwards; prior to this only ward data was available, and more detailed country of origin was only available for Smethwick as a whole. The 1971 data cited here and in Chapter 3 is for ED 434901A37 – the best fit to Marshall Street: Carey, '1971 Census ED Boundaries'. Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

¹³¹ Alun Severn, 'Smethwick research', [personal communication to author], 23 April 2014.

Three fifths (61 per cent) of residents were born in the UK in 2011.¹³² This compared to 69 per cent in the historic Spon Lane ward in which Marshall Street was located (Table 28).

The original development of the wider West Smethwick area was stimulated by the formation and rapid expansion of Chance's glassworks and the adjacent housing eventually wedged between canal and two railways. This locality attracted the first immigration into Smethwick, of specialist Belgian glassworkers, in the 1830s.¹³³ Figure 12 shows the progressive housing development in the next 100 years, north of the park gifted by the Chance family.¹³⁴ Marshall Street itself was largely built in the 1890s, later bordering Smethwick's Holly Lodge grammar schools opened in 1922.¹³⁵ Figure 3.13 in Chapter 3 shows a westward aerial view from the giant glassworks in c.1951, and Figure 15 shortly offers a continued view towards Smethwick's core in 1962. Bomb damage in West Smethwick and use of canalside land accounted for most of Smethwick's prefab housing, but the 1956 map shows the area on the cusp of change. Pilkington had just completed its takeover of Chance's and sold-off its lighthouse division.¹³⁶ Employment at Chance's fell 34.2 per cent by 1962 from the 2,888 workforce recorded in 1949.¹³⁷

¹³² Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2011 England and Wales: Key Statistics', [statistical report], <<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/default.asp>>, [contains public sector information licensed by ONS under the Open Government Licence v3.0 via NOMIS official labour market statistics], accessed 28 January 2014, Tables KS201EW, KS204EW, KS401EW. Marshall Street figure apportioned from three 2011 output areas based on the following factors: E00050832 (0.22); E00050835 (0.22); E00050836 (0.09). Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

¹³³ As discussed in Chapter 3; Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 88, 115.

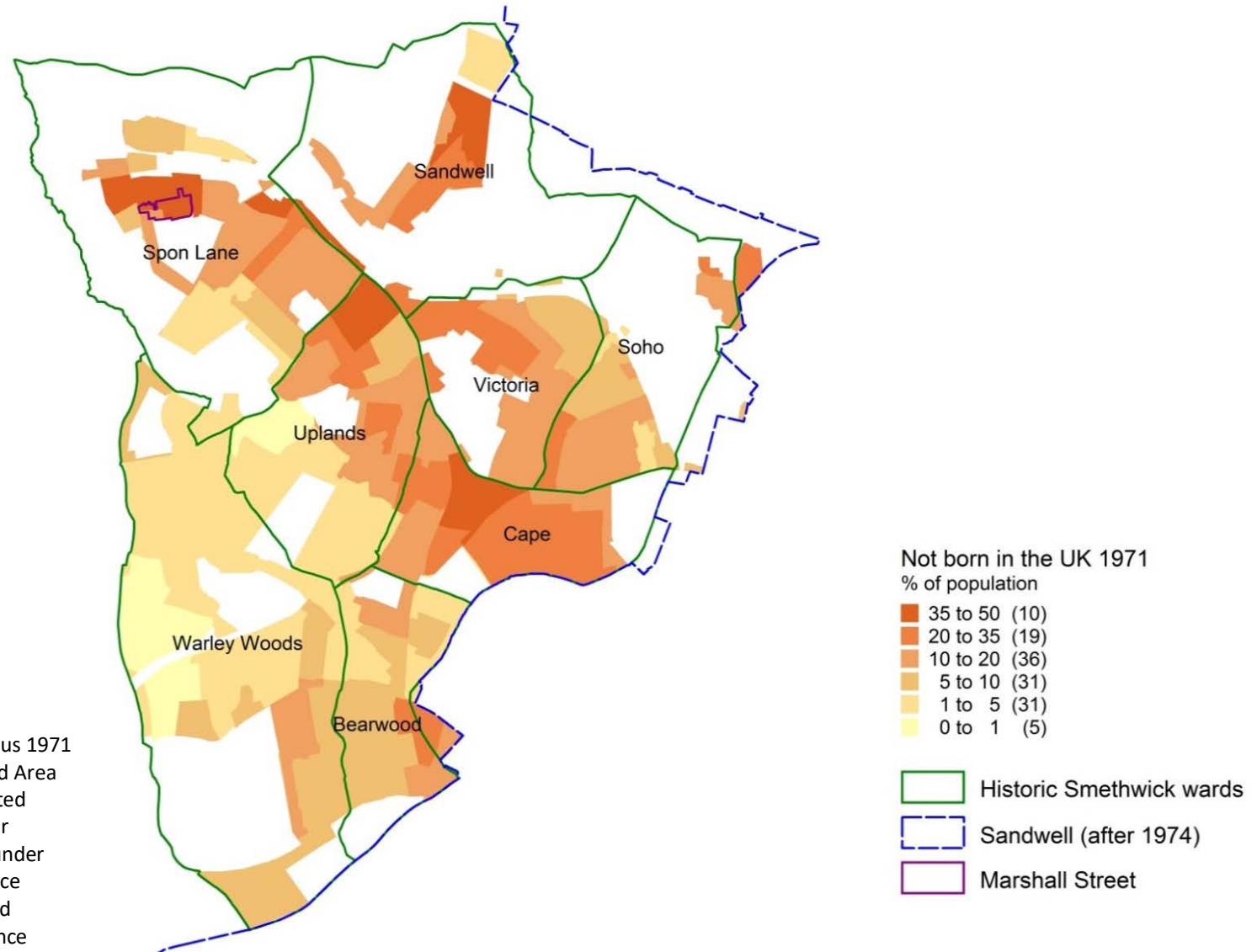
¹³⁴ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 119.

¹³⁵ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 101.

¹³⁶ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 116. Also Chance Glass Limited, 'Chance Brothers History', [corporate website], <<http://www.chanceglass.co.uk/?p=history>>, accessed 15 July 2016.

¹³⁷ Price, 'Industrial County Borough', Appendix II; Mann, 'Land Utilisation', Appendix II. Also see Special Note 10.

Figure 11: Population not born in UK: Marshall Street and Smethwick, 1971



Source: Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1971 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table SAS 08. Adapted from data from the Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

Table 28: Population not born in the UK historic Smethwick wards and Salford, 1951 to 2011 (%)

Year	Bearwood	Cape	Sandwell	Soho	Spon Lane	Uplands	Victoria	Warley Woods	Smethwick Total	Historic Salford	Data source
1951 ^A	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		2.8	4.3	General Register Office, 'Census 1951 England and Wales: County Reports—Lancashire and Staffordshire', Table 19.
1961 ^A	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		6.5	5.0	General Register Office, 'Census 1961 England and Wales: County Report—Lancashire and Staffordshire', Table 8.
1971	7.7	25.9	27.5	11.9	16.4	11.2	14.4	4.4	14.0	6.1	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1971 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table SAS13.
1981	9.8	32.0	30.0	19.7	25.6	13.8	16.5	4.9	18.0	5.9	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1981 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table SAS04.
1991	10.0	30.7	26.9	21.3	25.3	11.8	17.8	6.3	17.4	6.2	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1991 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table SAS07.
2001	12.1	30.3	29.5	28.1	30.2	13.9	25.9	8.0	20.0	8.7	Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2001 England and Wales: Key Statistics', Table KS005.
2011	20.3	42.8	37.0	43.4	42.0	26.2	40.4	11.8	30.9	20.2	Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2011 England and Wales: Key Statistics', Table KS204EW.

Base: Usual resident population not born in the UK.

^A No ward-level data published.

Note: Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

Note: Table supporting Figure 3.24, Chapter 3.

Figure 12: Marshall Street and West Smethwick area, c.1956

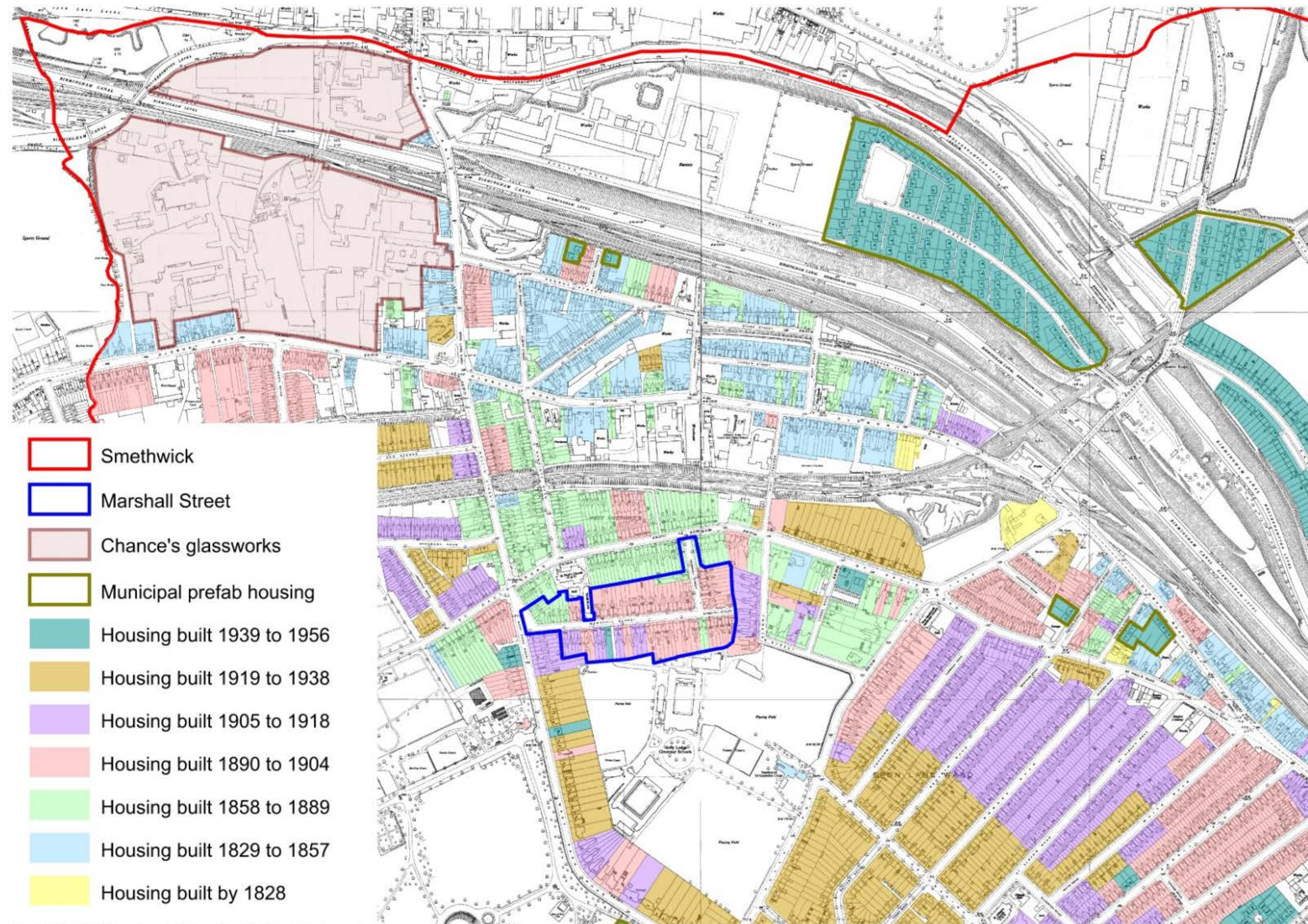
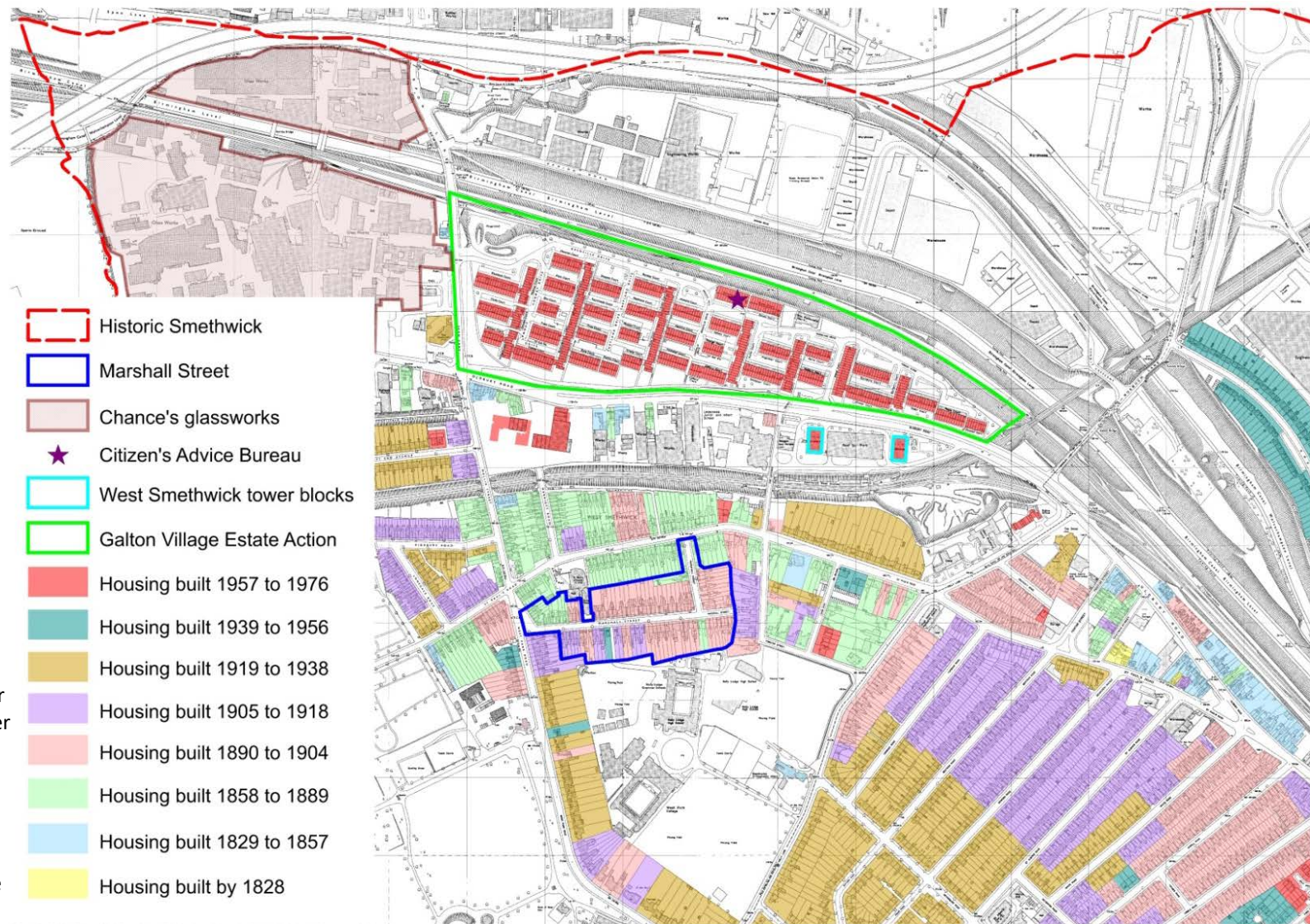


Figure 13: Marshall Street and West Smethwick area, c.1976



Source: See Special Note 4: Defining Smethwick—Changing boundaries and area identity. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A Landmark Information Group Ltd/EDINA product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

Figure 14: Marshall Street and West Smethwick area, c.2007

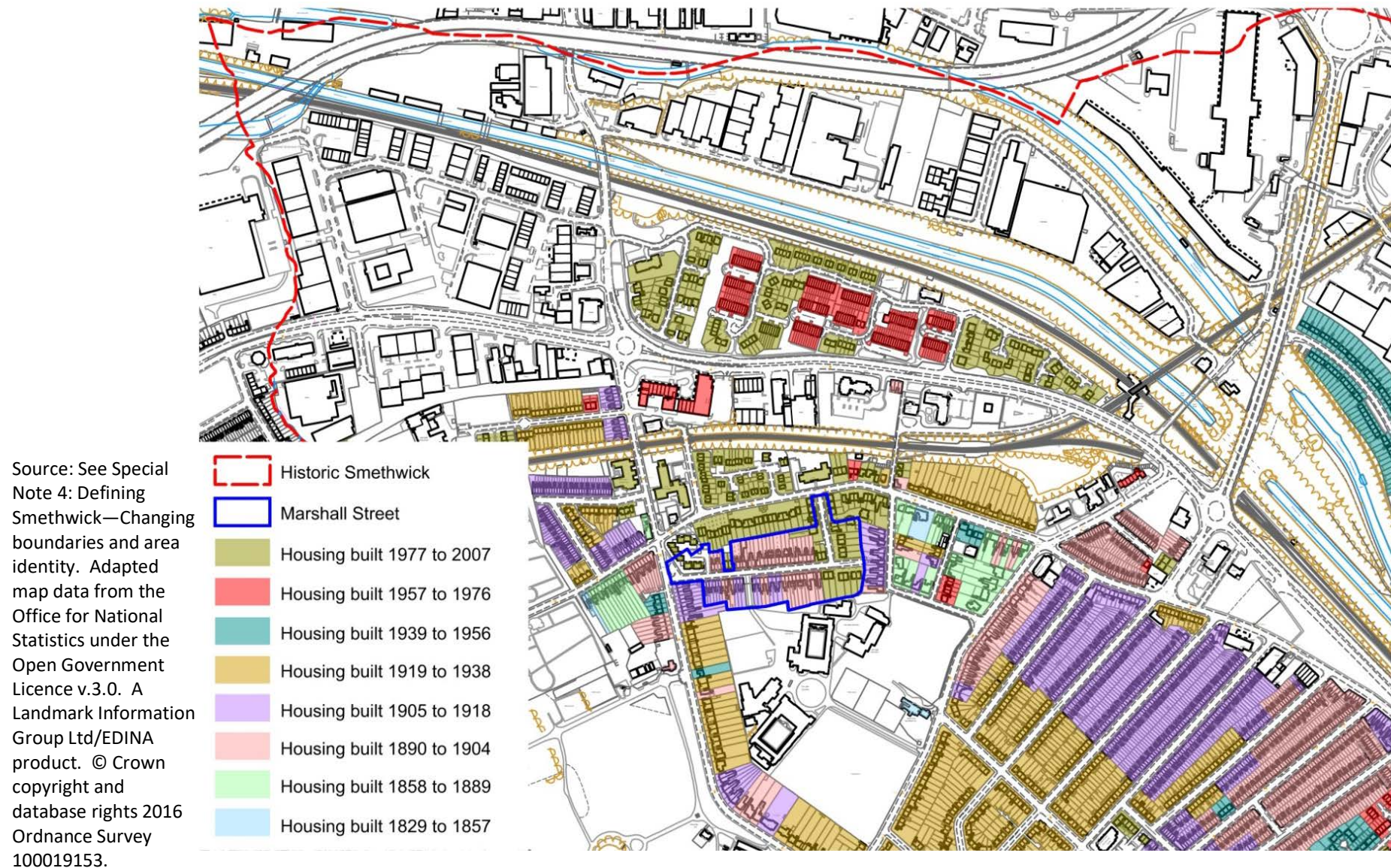


Figure 15: Northern Smethwick from the air, 1962



Source: 'Smethwick from the West, 1962', from G. C. Baugh *et. al.*, *A History of the County of Stafford*, 1976, Plate after 96. © Historic England Archive (Aerofilms Collection). Permission No: 5216 for image FL03/Aerofilms/A101394—Aerial view of Smethwick, 7 June 1962: Jarvis Gurr, 18 July 2016. Smethwick's dense and complex urban form, historically shaped by its transport corridor can be seen in this postwar aerial view towards Birmingham. Sites include (clockwise from left): the three Birmid companies; Henry Hope and Sons; Baldwin and Price Street flats and Boulton and Murdock Place, Windmill Lane; Victoria Park; the Brasshouse Lane crossing; Public library, High Street; Stour Valley and Stourbridge Extension railways; the Grade I-listed Galton Bridge and in the foreground, municipal 'prefab' housing between the Birmingham and Wolverhampton Canal levels.

The 1976 map shows the disappearance of the prefabs and the fundamental transformation wrought by the West Smethwick estate; the disastrous system-build 'Concrete Jungle' completed in 1969 (Figure 13). The wider community and amenity impact of redevelopment in West Smethwick was traced by Mann and later Jewkes.¹³⁸ Plate-glass production at Chance's ended in 1976, with the final 550 jobs lost in 1981.¹³⁹ Although Chance's was redeveloped as an industrial estate, a surviving but derelict fragment of the historic glassworks was used for skip hire and recycling in 2015, with efforts underway by a local trust to eventually create a heritage-based, mixed-use development.¹⁴⁰

The 2007 map shows a further transformation (Figure 14). Major clearance and private new-build recast the 'Concrete Jungle' as Galton Village. Of the eight pubs and clubs visible in earlier maps only two remained. Fire destroyed St. Paul's church in 1963 and its replacement closed in 1992.¹⁴¹ A dual carriageway had swept away the northern High Street, with the new Telford Way linking northwards to the M6 motorway Junction 1. The new Galton Bridge station opened in 1995, with the historic Grade 1-listed bridge by then

¹³⁸ Margaret B. Mann, 'West Smethwick: The evolution of an industrial society, 1920 to 1940', [research study], 1978; Lillian M. Jewkes, *Our Lost Village—The last years of Oldbury Road* (Smethwick: Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, n.d.).

¹³⁹ As discussed in Chapter 3 and Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, '*Industrial Heritage*', 60; Ray Drury, 'A Personal History of Chance Brothers', *Chance Encounters*, 11, West Bromwich: The Public, Taking Chances Project, 2006; 'Chance's to close shock—Angry workers thought they had done enough', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 22 January 1981.

¹⁴⁰ 'New units will bring 100 jobs', *News Telephone*, 27 September 1984; Chance Glass Works Heritage Trust, 'Information', [information website], <<http://www.cgwht.org/>>, accessed 4 July 2016; '£10 million masterplan for historic Smethwick glassworks', *Express & Star*, 26 April 2016.

¹⁴¹ Church congregations mostly dwindled in Smethwick in the post-war decades. This led to successive parish mergers within the Anglican Church, centred on Holy Trinity Church: Church of England, 'Holy Trinity, Parish of the Resurrection, Smethwick', [religious website], <<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/wwwholytrinitysmethwickcouk/>>, accessed 5 July 2016.

shut to vehicle use.¹⁴² Marshall Street itself was partially redeveloped as part of the protracted St. Paul's Road CPO scheme.¹⁴³ The 1960s, 'West Cross' shopping centre had badly declined by 2015, but the rest of the Oldbury Road was marked by several new healthcare facilities.¹⁴⁴ Sheltered housing schemes were also a feature of the Mallin Street area.¹⁴⁵ A Hindu cultural resource centre was opened in Spon Lane.¹⁴⁶ Despite this tumult, the area retained the largest remaining concentration of mid-Victorian housing in Smethwick.

18. Basis of Smethwick in Warley and Sandwell

Under local government reorganisation, West Bromwich County Borough absorbed Tipton and Wednesbury and retained its name and legal basis, whereas Smethwick was dissolved in 1966.¹⁴⁷ Smethwick's comparator Salford accounted for 47 per cent of the population of the new metropolitan district which retained its name in 1974, despite combining five local authorities. Smethwick accounted for 40 per cent of the Warley population (1961 data), but only 19 per cent of the Sandwell population (1971 data).¹⁴⁸ The administrative centre of

¹⁴² Wikipedia contributors, 'Smethwick Galton Bridge Railway Station', *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopaedia* [wiki website], (updated 18 June 2016) <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smethwick_Galton_Bridge_railway_station>, accessed 3 July 2016.

¹⁴³ Peter Wilkinson, 'Interview with Author', 6 June 2013.

¹⁴⁴ Warley Corporation, 'Warley Official Guide', [council report], Cheltenham: Ed. J. Burrow, 1973, 20. In 2015 these included Swanswell Drugs and Alcohol Support; Leasowes Intermediate Care Centre; Halcyon Midwifery Birth Centre; and the Ideal for All Independent Living Centre.

¹⁴⁵ Alun Severn, 'Film Text', [personal memories of growing up in Marshall Street, Smethwick], 2008.

¹⁴⁶ Hindu Cultural Resource Centre, 'Durga Bhawan', [information website], <<http://www.durgabhawan.com/>>, accessed 4 July 2016.

¹⁴⁷ West Bromwich Corporation, 'The County Borough of West Bromwich Official Handbook', [council report], Cheltenham: Ed. J. Burrow, 1972, 9; Inskip, 'Hamlet to County Borough', 1; Warley Corporation, 'Warley Official Guide', [council report], Cheltenham: Ed. J. Burrow, 1967, 17.

¹⁴⁸ The 1961 population of Smethwick was 68,390 (Special Note 5) but 67,501 when adjusted for the transfer of the Albion Estate to West Bromwich in the 1966 local government reorganisation. The Warley (1961) population was 170,160: Warley Corporation, 'Report of Survey: Population', [council report], *Warley Structure Plan*, Smethwick: Warley Corporation, 1973, 4. Smethwick's 1971 population was estimated to be 62,254 and

Warley Corporation was Smethwick Council House, but for Sandwell was in West Bromwich Town Hall and the new 'Sandwell Council House' in Oldbury from 1991.

19. Electoral Politics in Smethwick and Sandwell

This technical note supports the discussion of electoral arrangements and election results in Smethwick and Sandwell in Chapters 4 and 5. Following its 1928 expansion, Smethwick County Borough was divided into eight electoral wards (see Special Note 4 and Figure 2). These were each represented by three elected councillors and one alderman, next in status to the Mayor. Aldermen, a feature of English local government until 1972, were not elected by voters, but were co-opted as members by councillors for a term of six years. Councillors served three-year terms, with one third retiring annually, so there were annual elections between 1945 and 1965.¹⁴⁹

These electoral arrangements continued with formation of Warley County Borough. Inaugural elections were held in Warley in February 1966. As was the normal practice, the new Warley aldermanic appointments were made from the body of councillors, requiring eight by-elections in March 1966. There were subsequently annual elections between 1967 and 1972. When Sandwell was created in 1974, the existing Warley and West Bromwich wards were carried into the new local authority (subsequent boundary changes in 1979 and

that of Sandwell 330,159—based on respective totals for West Bromwich (166,592) and Warley (163,567): Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1971 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table C71s01 032. Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

¹⁴⁹ Local elections for English county boroughs were held annually from 1945 to 1972 with one exception. During 1945-47 elections were held in November. The election date was then brought forward to May. To accommodate this change no elections were held in 1948: Alan Willis, *Volume 8: County Borough Election Results in Great Britain 1945–1972 England: Salford-York, Scotland & Wales*, eds Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher (Twentieth Century Local Election Results; Plymouth: University of Plymouth, Elections Centre, 2011), ix.

2004 are discussed in Special Note 4). The 1972 Local Government Act abolished aldermanic appointments, and provided three councillors per ward serving four year terms, with a third retiring annually. This created an electoral gap every four years at metropolitan district level, when metropolitan county elections were held until abolition in 1986.

Ward election results for the Smethwick and Warley period were obtained from the Elections Centre, University of Plymouth.¹⁵⁰ This was augmented by consulting members' year books, which provided information on aldermanic appointments and ward electorate totals.¹⁵¹ Ward-level data for the period 1973 to 2007 was obtained from Sandwell Council, based on past data provided to the author between 1987 and 1996; and a request to the elections office in 2012.¹⁵² Election results since 2008 are also published online by the council.¹⁵³ Together this data identified 179 people listed in the frontispiece of the thesis as serving as elected members on Smethwick Council, or representing Smethwick on Warley or Sandwell Councils from 1945 to 2015. It further enabled voting turnout to be calculated, and it provided a proxy measure for localised population change between successive national censuses. Clearly, however, the main data use has been to chart the party political system in Smethwick and after 1966, its wider local authority.

¹⁵⁰ Willis, 'County Borough Election Results'.

¹⁵¹ Smethwick Corporation, 'Members' Year Book', [council report], Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, [1944/45 to 1965/66]; Warley Corporation, 'Members' Year Book', [council report], Smethwick: Warley Corporation, [1966/67 to 1973/74].

¹⁵² Paula Bayes, 'Sandwell Election Results', [personal communication to author], 15 May 2012.

¹⁵³ Sandwell MBC, 'Election Results', [government website], <http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200205/elections_and_voting/3607/election_results>, accessed 17 May 2015. Also Adam Carey, 'Politics in Sandwell 1979 to 2010 and Futures: Implications for the Labour Group', [political paper], 2010.

Table 29 presents the share of the popular vote by respective political parties contesting local elections in the Smethwick area between 1945 and 2016.¹⁵⁴ Following local government reorganisation, it is based on 'best-fit wards' to historic Smethwick: eight wards in 1966–78; five in 1979–2003; and four since 2004 (Special Note 4 and Figure 2). The thesis also uses an electoral urban comparator for Smethwick. From 1945 to 1972, this is the average of English county boroughs. These were affected by local government reorganisations in the period, but in 1972 stood at 83 authorities. From 1973 to 2015, it uses the average of the 36 metropolitan districts. Data is again provided by the Elections Centre, University of Plymouth: the Willis study to 1972 and the centre's website for the period since.¹⁵⁵

Table 30 shows turnout for the Soho and Victoria wards and English county borough-metropolitan average.¹⁵⁶ Table 31 places the Labour vote in Soho and Victoria in the same context. Table 32 similarly compares Labour voting support in Sandwell since 1973. Figure 16 examines the appeal in Sandwell, since 1979, of 'insurgent' parties of the political right: the National Front and its effective successor, the British National Party (termed here the 'far right'); and the recent entry of the UK Independence Party (UKIP). Finally, Figure 17 shows the political composition elected councillors since their number was reduced from 90 to 72 in 1979. In 2016, Labour held 71 Sandwell seats and UKIP one.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ The thesis covers the period to 2015, but data for 2016 is included here for completeness.

¹⁵⁵ Willis, 'County Borough Election Results', 33-8 (Smethwick); 189-92 (Warley); *The Elections Centre*, <<http://www.electionscentre.co.uk/>>, British Local Elections Database, University of Plymouth, Elections Centre.

¹⁵⁶ Willis noted that reporting of electorates and turnouts was variable in the postwar period and data used in his turnout summary table for county boroughs was sometimes based on a reduced set of local authorities and/or a restricted set of local wards: Willis, 'County Borough Election Results', Fig 1: Turnout 1945-1972, xxi.

¹⁵⁷ Although one was suspended due to ongoing investigation: 'Labour Party suspends Sandwell councillor Mahboob Hussain AGAIN', *Express & Star*, 18 May 2016.

Table 29: Smethwick Local elections—Party share of the Popular Vote, 1945 to 2016 (%)

Year	Labour	Conservative	Liberal	Green	Socialist	NF/BNP	UKIP	Independent
1945	62.1	34.0	—	—	—	—	—	4.0
1946	56.7	34.6	—	—	—	—	—	8.7
1947	49.4	50.4	—	—	0.2	—	—	—
1949	56.1	43.8	—	—	0.1	—	—	—
1950	55.5	44.0	—	—	0.5	—	—	—
1951	50.1	49.7	0.2	—	—	—	—	—
1952	62.8	31.8	—	—	—	—	—	5.4
1953	56.7	43.3	—	—	—	—	—	—
1954	54.7	45.1	—	—	0.2	—	—	—
1955	52.8	46.7	—	—	0.5	—	—	—
1956	59.9	39.6	—	—	0.5	—	—	—
1957	58.7	40.7	—	—	0.6	—	—	—
1958	58.5	38.5	2.6	—	0.4	—	—	—
1959	55.0	41.8	2.7	—	0.5	—	—	—
1960	44.9	48.8	5.8	—	0.5	—	—	—
1961	43.7	49.5	6.3	—	0.5	—	—	—
1962	36.7	44.7	16.4	—	0.9	—	—	1.4
1963	38.6	50.2	10.4	—	0.9	—	—	—
1964	39.7	50.5	9.2	—	0.6	—	—	—
1965	35.2	64.3	—	—	0.5	—	—	—
1966	45.7	49.3	2.9	—	—	—	—	2.1
1967	35.1	64.8	—	—	0.1	—	—	—
1968	30.9	69.1	—	—	—	—	—	—
1969	33.5	64.8	—	—	1.7	—	—	—
1970	47.9	52.1	—	—	—	—	—	—
1971	64.7	35.3	—	—	—	—	—	—
1972	62.7	37.4	—	—	—	—	—	—
1973	60.3	39.7	—	—	—	—	—	—
1975	45.9	50.1	4.1	—	—	—	—	—
1976	43.7	45.9	—	—	0.4	10.1	—	—
1978	53.4	43.1	—	—	—	1.9	—	1.5
1979	58.8	41.2	—	—	—	—	—	—
1980	66.8	33.2	—	—	—	—	—	—
1982	54.1	30.5	15.3	—	—	—	—	—
1983	54.5	33.9	8.0	—	1.3	2.3	—	—
1984	59.5	32.0	8.5	—	—	—	—	—
1986	61.6	25.1	12.7	0.7	—	—	—	—
1987	55.2	31.8	13.0	—	—	—	—	—
1988	64.8	29.0	6.3	—	—	—	—	—
1990	67.1	24.1	7.2	—	—	—	—	1.7
1991	57.9	32.6	9.5	—	—	—	—	—
1992	54.3	37.4	8.3	—	—	—	—	—

Year	Labour	Conservative	Liberal	Green	Socialist	NF/BNP	UKIP	Independent
1994	61.9	17.0	13.2	—	—	—	—	8.0
1995	79.2	17.0	2.7	—	—	—	—	1.2
1996	75.1	17.1	2.5	—	—	—	—	5.4
1998	65.9	21.2	6.6	—	—	—	—	6.4
1999	62.2	22.0	8.4	—	—	—	—	7.3
2000	57.2	28.3	3.2	—	—	—	—	11.3
2002	67.3	22.7	3.2	—	6.9	—	—	—
2003	58.2	24.5	4.4	—	13.0	—	—	—
2004	45.7	22.7	24.0	—	7.6	—	—	—
2006	56.8	24.4	13.8	2.4	—	1.7	—	0.9
2007	56.7	25.4	17.9	—	—	—	—	—
2008	57.9	28.5	11.3	—	1.7	—	—	0.7
2010	59.8	21.1	6.8	4.1	—	4.3	—	4.0
2011	78.4	15.7	1.1	4.8	—	—	—	—
2012	81.2	8.1	1.9	2.1	—	—	—	6.7
2014	77.0	11.7	—	10.2	1.1	—	—	—
2015	71.1	12.1	—	5.8	0.4	—	10.6	—
2016	80.5	12.0	—	7.4	—	—	—	—

Base: Percentage share of valid votes cast.

Source: Alan Willis, *Volume 8: County Borough Election Results in Great Britain 1945–1972 England: Salford-York, Scotland & Wales*, eds Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher (Twentieth Century Local Election Results; Plymouth: University of Plymouth, Elections Centre, 2011); Sandwell MBC, 'Sandwell Borough Election', [statistical report], *Municipal Ward Election Results*, West Bromwich and Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, [1973 to 2016].

Note: The category 'Liberal' includes the Liberal Party from 1945–88, the Social Democratic Party 1983–87 and Liberal Democrats 1988–2015. The category 'Socialist' includes Communist Party, Socialist Labour Party and Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition. NF/BNF denotes the far-right National Front and British National Party. UKIP is the UK Independence Party.

Note: The use of — em dash denotes that a particular party did not contest any designated Smethwick ward in this year.

Note: This table supports Figure 4.2 in Chapter 4.

Table 30: Turnout in Local Elections in Soho and Victoria wards compared to County Borough and Metropolitan Average, 1945 to 2014 (%)

Year	Soho	Victoria	Soho and Victoria	County Borough and Metropolitan average
1945	61.7	— ^A		50
1946	— ^A	46.2		45
1947	58.4	50.4		54
1949	52.5	55.0		53
1950	52.4	40.9		47
1951	54.6	38.2		47
1952	53.8	48.3		52
1953	45.4	38.2		47
1954	50.4	35.2		46
1955	40.9	37.4		46.5
1956	34.2	27.6		40.5
1957	34.2	32.0		43
1958	32.2	29.4		44
1959	39.0	32.5		43
1960	33.3	35.5		37
1961	45.4	40.0		43
1962	38.8	31.9		43
1963	40.9	32.5		44
1964	46.7	33.1		43.5
1965	49.0	37.2		40
1966	41.7	32.6		38
1967	31.9	30.2		42
1968	29.8	27.7		36.5
1969	34.3	26.8		36
1970	33.3	32.6		39
1971	32.8	37.3		40
1972	29.9	36.0		35.5
1973	33.9	26.4		33.4
1975	28.5	18.9		32.7
1976	36.4	28.4		38.1
1978	34.8	31.6		37.2
1979			— ^B	— ^B
1980			26.0	36.3
1982			26.8	38.8
1983			33.3	42
1984			27.9	39.8
1986			28.0	39.9
1987			25.6	44.7
1988			28.4	40.1
1990			35.3	46.2

Year	Soho	Victoria	Soho and Victoria	County Borough and Metropolitan average
1991			30.7	40.8
1992			23.1	32.5
1994			31.8	38.9
1995			27.8	33.8
1996			23.3	30.5
1998			22.2	24.8
1999			26.1	26.1
2000			22.2	26
2002			27.6	31.1
2003			27.4	32.1
2004			40.0	41.3
2006			38.8	34.7
2007			36.5	34.9
2008			32.8	34.1
2010			— ^B	— ^B
2011			39.0	38.2
2012			31.0	31.4
2014			36.9	33.5
2015			— ^B	— ^B
2016			34.1	Not available

Base: Recorded ballot papers issued as percentage of the total electoral register.

Source: Alan Willis, *Volume 8: County Borough Election Results in Great Britain 1945–1972 England: Salford-York, Scotland & Wales*, eds Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher (Twentieth Century Local Election Results; Plymouth: University of Plymouth, Elections Centre, 2011); Sandwell MBC, 'Sandwell Borough Election', [statistical report], *Municipal Ward Election Results*, West Bromwich and Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, [1973 to 2016].

^A Elected unopposed—no ballot required.

^B Data not included because local and general election was held on the same day, so that turnout levels are not comparable with other years.

Note: This table supports Figure 5.13 in Chapter 5.

Table 31: Labour vote in Local Elections in Soho and Victoria wards compared to County Borough and Metropolitan Average, 1945 to 2015 (%)

Year	Soho	Victoria	Soho and Victoria	County Borough and Metropolitan average
1945	39.6	— ^A		50.2
1946	— ^A	77.4		46.6
1947	47.5	61.9		42.7
1949	62.1	71.4		45.8
1950	62.0	68.6		46.1
1951	51.7	62.4		43.0
1952	67.2	77.8		55.2
1953	67.9	69.8		49.4
1954	50.6	74.7		50.4
1955	60.7	64.6		46.5
1956	69.8	72.5		50.0
1957	68.8	76.4		50.1
1958	71.8	82.1		49.2
1959	67.0	69.2		45.1
1960	56.9	64.7		40.7
1961	50.8	56.8		43.9
1962	40.3	51.0		43.1
1963	46.4	61.2		43.8
1964	45.3	59.6		46.4
1965	36.9	48.2		38.3
1966	35.5	52.6		43.3
1967	37.3	44.4		36.4
1968	30.1	37.0		30.6
1969	30.7	47.2		32.8
1970	44.5	60.7		44.7
1971	63.3	74.5		55.6
1972	67.1	76.0		52.3
1973	62.4	77.8		44.1
1975	59.2	62.2		33.9
1976	48.2	61.3		37.5
1978	66.5	58.4		42.5
1979			67.6	45.9
1980			78.1	48.9
1982			68.0	38.1
1983			75.8	44.6
1984			76.4	48.5
1986			79.2	48.1
1987			74.4	41.9
1988			81.9	51.0
1990			83.8	54.6

1991		77.4	45.0
1992		71.3	39.3
1994		62.5	51.5
1995		87.3	57.1
1996		54.8	53.1
1998		70.9	45.8
1999		73.3	44.8
2000		70.2	38.4
2002		86.7	43.1
2003		73.1	39.9
2004		56.1	32.6
2006		65.5	34.0
2007		56.9	34.4
2008		70.9	31.4
2010		67.3	38.9
2011		90.8	49.5
2012		95.2	51.1
2014		84.2	43.0
2015		82.1	44.7
2016		82.3	Not available

Base: Percentage share of valid votes cast.

Source: Alan Willis, *Volume 8: County Borough Election Results in Great Britain 1945–1972 England: Salford-York, Scotland & Wales*, eds Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher (Twentieth Century Local Election Results; Plymouth: University of Plymouth, Elections Centre, 2011); Sandwell MBC, 'Sandwell Borough Election', [statistical report], *Municipal Ward Election Results*, West Bromwich and Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, [1973 to 2016].

^A Elected unopposed—no ballot required.

Note: This table supports Figure 4.2 and Figure 5.24 in Chapters 4 and 5.

Table 32: Labour voting support in Sandwell and indexed to Metropolitan District average, 1973 to 2016

Year	Sandwell Labour vote	Metropolitan Labour vote	Indexed Sandwell Labour vote (MDC average = 100)
1973	60.3	44.1	136.7
1975	39.7	33.9	117.1
1976	40.7	37.5	108.5
1978	45.2	42.5	106.4
1979	50.7	45.9	110.5
1980	58.9	48.9	120.5
1982	42.0	38.1	110.3
1983	48.2	44.6	108.1
1984	53.1	48.5	109.6
1986	55.8	48.1	116.0
1987	47.2	41.9	112.6
1988	58.4	51.0	114.6
1990	57.0	54.6	104.4
1991	44.3	45.0	98.4
1992	37.2	39.3	94.7
1994	54.1	51.5	105.0
1995	63.0	57.1	110.4
1996	61.0	53.1	114.8
1998	55.0	45.8	120.1
1999	54.9	44.8	122.4
2000	46.3	38.4	120.5
2002	52.1	43.1	120.9
2003	47.0	39.9	117.8
2004	43.5	32.6	133.5
2006	44.4	34.0	130.5
2007	44.9	34.4	130.7
2008	43.8	31.4	139.6
2010	47.4	38.9	121.9
2011	65.7	49.5	132.7
2012	72.0	51.1	140.9
2014	58.5	43.0	136.0
2015	53.3	44.7	119.2
2016	67.2	Not published yet	

Base: Percentage share of valid votes cast.

Source: *The Elections Centre*, <<http://www.electionscentre.co.uk/>>, British Local Elections Database, University of Plymouth, Elections Centre.

Note: This table supports Figure 4.2 in Chapter 4.

The overall Sandwell electoral picture is more important to understanding policy affecting Smethwick than the Labour Party's (impregnable) position in Smethwick. The data suggests relative decline in Labour support in Sandwell from 1973 to 1992, with particular losses in 1991–92, associated with instability and conflict in the Labour Group and the local management of the poll tax (Table 32). This period was identified as a 'critical conjuncture' in Chapter 4. Labour regained seats thereafter and retained an overwhelming Sandwell majority throughout the 1997–2010 Labour national government. After severe losses in the mid-1990s, Tory support never recovered, while the Liberal Democrats collapsed following their national coalition with the Conservatives. Both parties also suffered from the defection of sitting councillors to Labour, with its available political patronage. The absence of a functioning mainstream party system then left Labour, as seen, with a near-complete monopoly of council seats (Figure 17).

This political vacuum was first exploited by independents.¹⁵⁸ Then in 2003, the British National Party (BNP) and similarly far-right Freedom Party candidates secured an average 33.4 per cent of the vote where they stood (Figure 16).¹⁵⁹ By 2006, the BNP held four council seats, although it lost them all by 2010. In this period of decline, the BNP actually contested more seats, although it virtually avoided Smethwick. Figure 18 nevertheless shows particularly high level of support for the BNP in Tipton, West Bromwich

¹⁵⁸ This included a by-election gain, when a GP won the Smethwick St. Pauls ward in November 1999. In the normal 1999 elections, independents in five wards averaged 20.5 per cent of the vote; and 21.8 per cent in four wards in 2000. See Carey, 'Politics in Sandwell'.

¹⁵⁹ Carey, 'Politics in Sandwell'.

and Rowley Regis.¹⁶⁰ In line with its national collapse, the BNP then petered out in Sandwell in 2011–12.

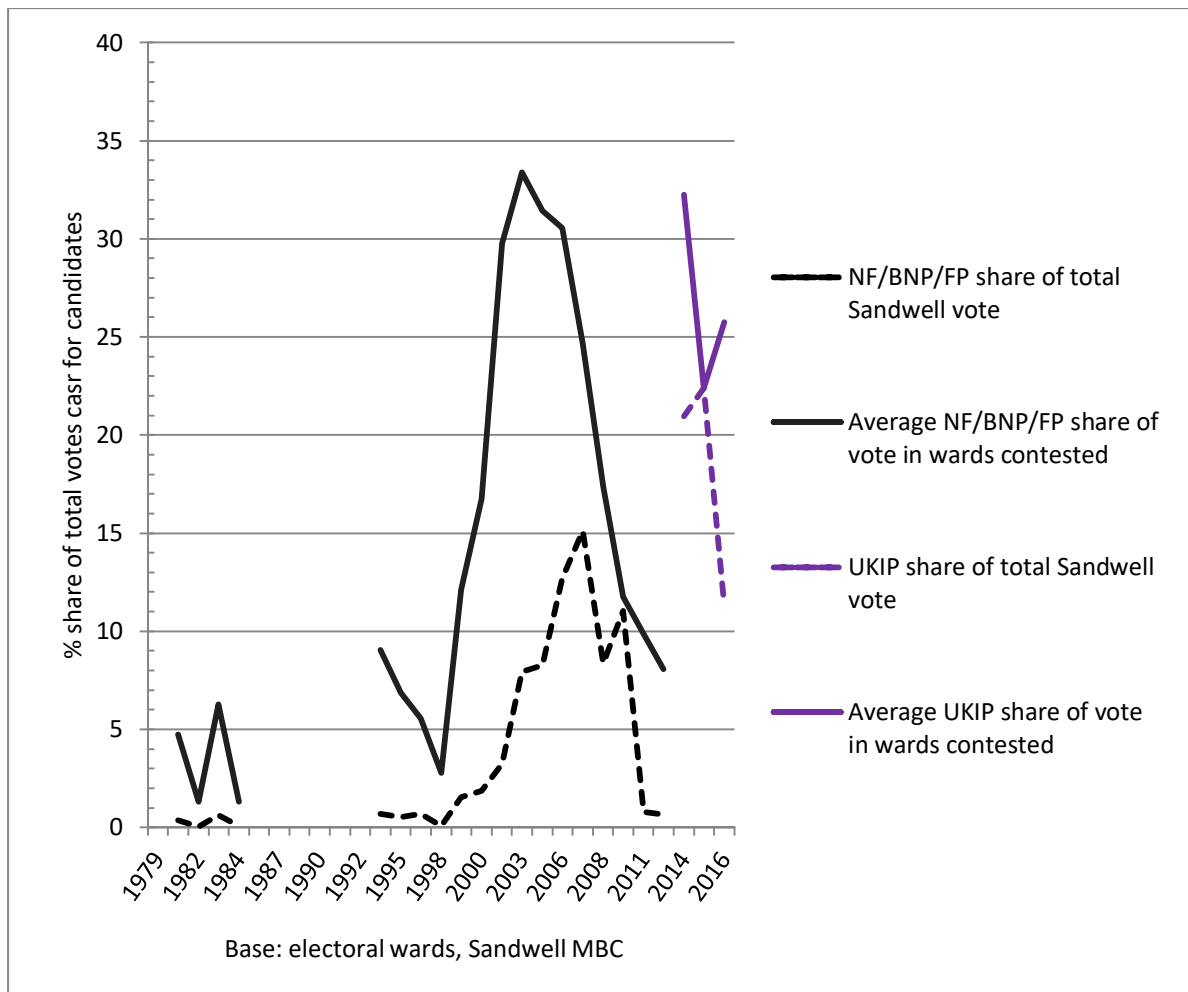
UKIP stood in Sandwell for the first time in 2014, securing from scratch, an average of 32.3 per cent across sixteen wards, although it won in just one. By 2016 UKIP had slipped back, but still secured 25.8 per cent across eleven wards (Figure 16).¹⁶¹ During the life of Sandwell the legacy of deindustrialisation and continued economic decline meanwhile entrenched severe levels of deprivation in much of Sandwell (see Chapter 4). This electoral history showed the receptiveness of economically declining, largely-white, and working class areas of Sandwell to anti-immigration party agendas. The Labour Party's restrictive stance on asylum seekers and refugees from 2014 is discussed in Chapter 4. The corruption scandal that intensified in Sandwell in May 2016 and the legacy of the EU referendum, when 66.7 per cent in Sandwell voted to leave, is likely to provide a further springboard for UKIP and related challenges to Labour.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ The BNP stood just once in the Smethwick area, in Smethwick ward itself in 2006, when it gained 7.7 per cent support: Carey, 'Politics in Sandwell'.

¹⁶¹ A study by YouGov showed Sandwell to be the ninth most Eurosceptic of 188 local authorities polled: YouGov UK, 'The Eurosceptic map of Britain', [Reports], (updated 28 February 2016) <<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2016/02/28/eurosceptic-map-britain/>>, accessed 1 March 2016.

¹⁶² The eventual leave vote in Sandwell ranked twenty-ninth highest of 382 voting areas in the referendum: The Electoral Commission, 'EU Referendum Results', [government website], <<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/find-information-by-subject/elections-and-referendums/upcoming-elections-and-referendums/eu-referendum/electorate-and-count-information>>, accessed 5 July 2016. Also see '*Black Country Brexit "best day of my life" says voter*', Midlands Today, 24 June 2016 [Television news broadcast via Facebook], <<https://www.facebook.com/midlandstoday/videos/10154253730714761/?pnref=story>> accessed 27 June 2016. The corruption scandal is also referred to in Chapter 4.

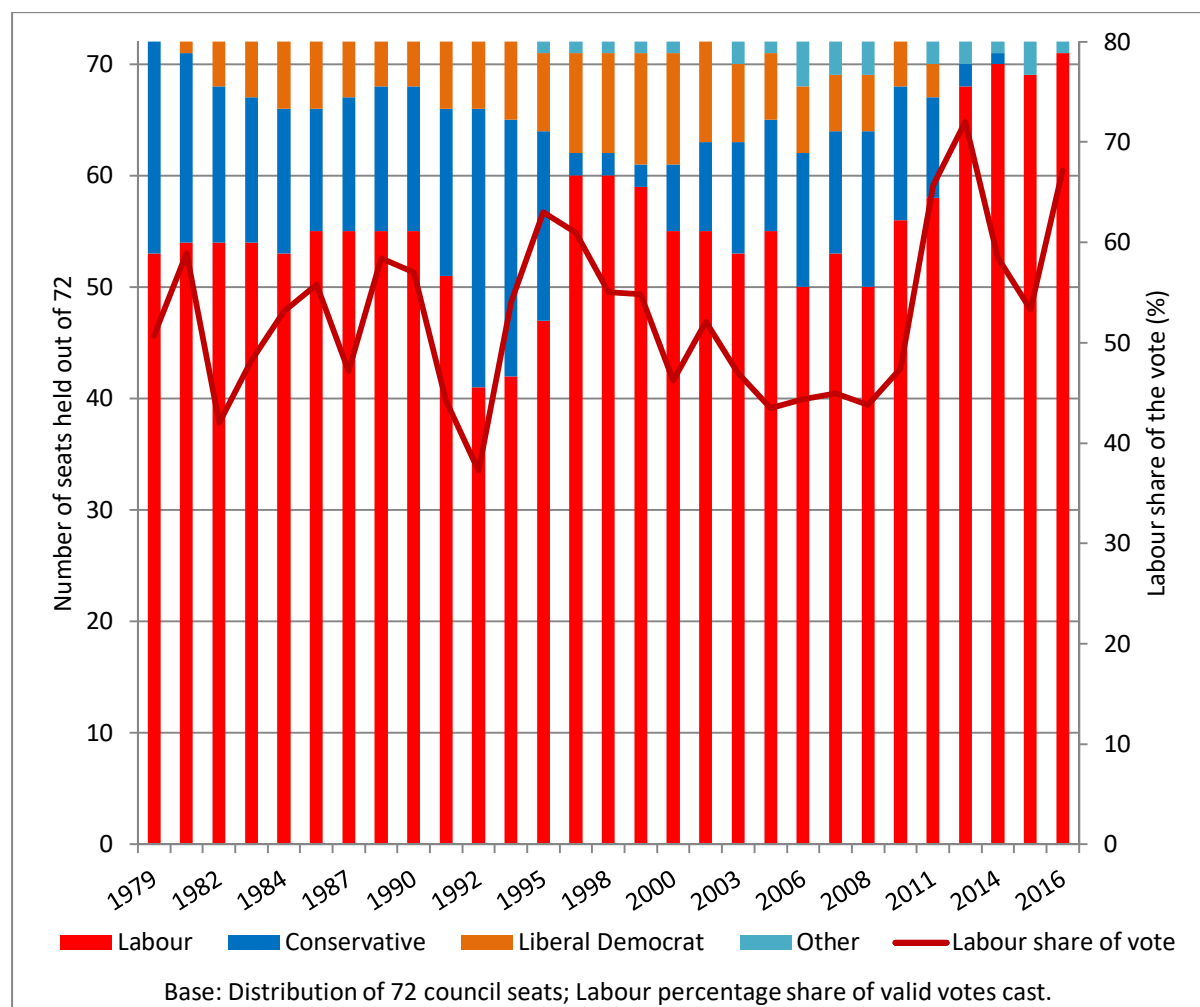
Figure 16: Far-right parties and UKIP: Share of Popular vote in Sandwell, 1979 to 2016



Source: Sandwell MBC, 'Sandwell Borough Election', [statistical report], *Municipal Ward Election Results*, West Bromwich and Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, [1973 to 2016].

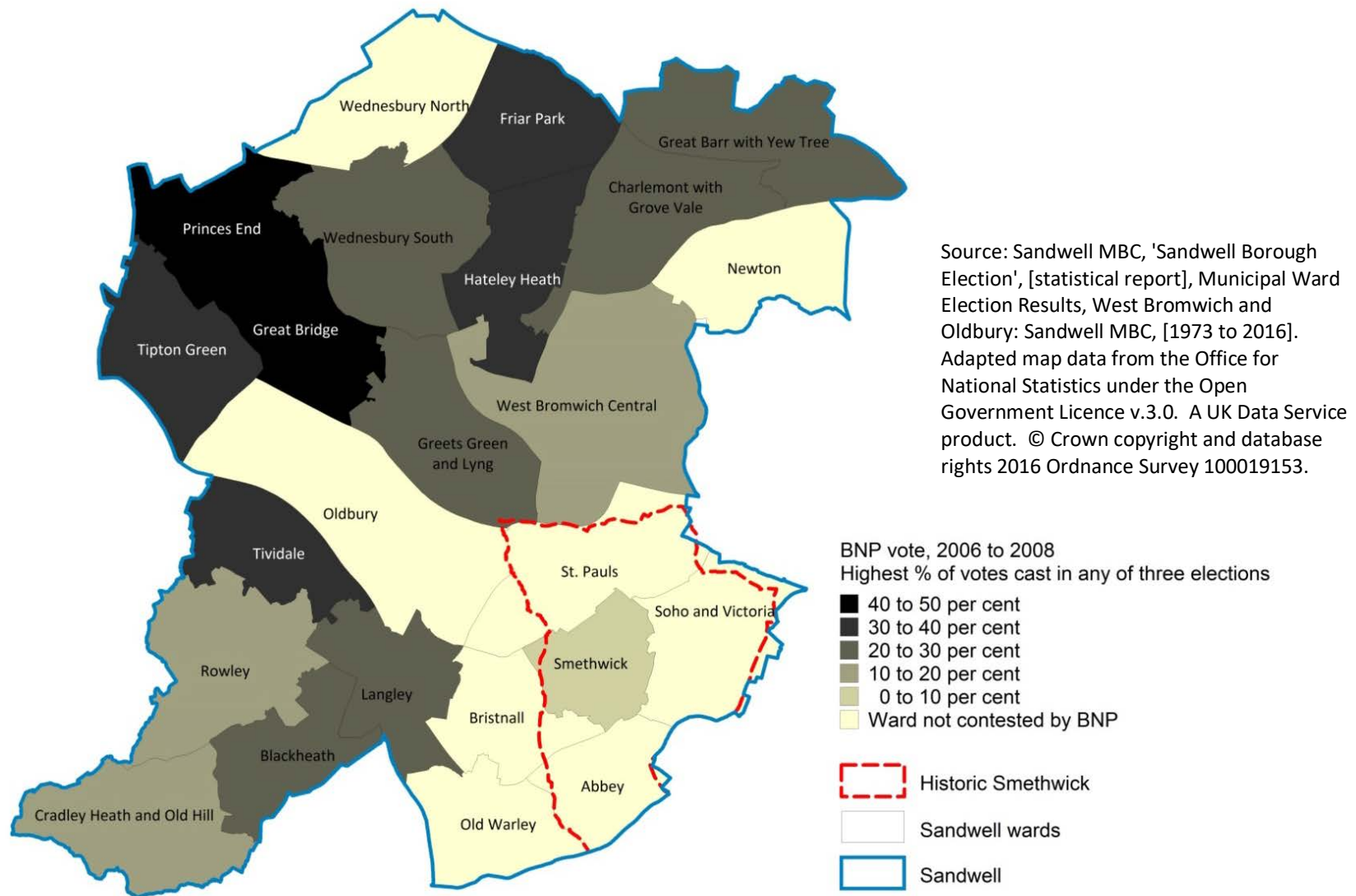
Note: NF/BNP/FP denotes, respectively, the far-right National Front, British National Party and Freedom Party. UKIP is the UK Independence Party.

Figure 17: Sandwell Council: Political composition and the Labour vote, 1979 to 2016



Source: Sandwell MBC, 'Sandwell Borough Election', [statistical report], *Municipal Ward Election Results*, West Bromwich and Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, [1973 to 2016].

Figure 18: Voting support for British National Party, Sandwell wards, 2006–08



20. Sandwell Labour Group Politics

This short account is based on the personal experience of the author from 1988 to 1996. Prior to the introduction of a cabinet system in Sandwell in 2000, all principal council positions (committee chairs, vice chairs, membership of outside bodies as well as Leader) were decided at the annual general meeting (AGM) of the controlling Labour Group, which met within days of the local elections. In the 1980s, this would be marked by competing 'slates' (lists) of candidates for positions from each faction. The 'winner-takes-all culture' meant there were positions available to all those within the dominant faction who desired the power and benefits they conferred. This provided reciprocal and highly effective 'glue' in the actual AGM balloting. Voting was secret, but tellers (the people who counted the ballot papers) had various monitoring techniques and identified or inferred loyalty breaches could be punished by selective purging from the slate during the AGM itself. So in 1996, a main committee chair (a significant position and time commitment in its own right) also had, on average, membership of 32 committees, working groups, and outside bodies, compared to an average of nine among Labour backbenchers.¹⁶³

21. Town-based analysis of Sandwell Political Executive

This note identifies the extended senior-level power exercised by Labour councillors representing Smethwick wards on Sandwell Council. Some 62 Labour Party councillors were main committee chairs and/or cabinet members in Sandwell between 1974 and 2012, and a quarter (25.8 per cent) represented Smethwick wards. A comparison of total executive years (individuals' total time in post = 401 years) in relation to the proportion of electoral

¹⁶³ Adam Carey, 'The Future of Sandwell Labour Group', [political paper], 1996, 5.

wards located in each town showed Smethwick councillors occupied 41.1 per cent of executive years, but 20.8 per cent of seats (Table 33).

Table 33: Labour councillors comprising the Sandwell MBC Executive by ‘Sandwell Town’, 1974–8 and 1979–2012^A

	Average proportion of Sandwell Wards (30/24) ^B	Total chairs/cabinet post-holders (62 persons)	Aggregate executive years (401)
Oldbury	13.0	8.1	7.2
Rowley Regis	16.1	22.6	23.2
Smethwick	20.8	25.8	41.4
Tipton	12.1	11.3	8.2
Wednesbury	8.6	3.2	2.0
West Bromwich	29.3	29.0	18.0

Source: Sandwell MBC, 'Members' Year Book', [council report], West Bromwich and Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, [1988/89 to 1995/96]; Alex Goddard, 'Historic councillor information', [personal communication to author], 24 June 2012.

^A Data excludes 1978/79, when Sandwell had its only Conservative administration.

^B Elections were first held in 1973 and the executive was operational from 1974. Sandwell was divided into 30 wards from 1973–9 and thereafter 24 wards.

22. The 1964 Parliamentary Election in Smethwick

This note further discusses the ‘national scandal’ of the 1964 Smethwick election.¹⁶⁴ At the general election on 15 October 1964, the sitting Labour MP, Patrick Gordon Walker, lost Smethwick by 1,174 votes. A national swing to Labour of 3.5 per cent was transformed, in Smethwick, into a 7.2 per cent swing to the Conservatives. Their parliamentary candidate, Alderman Peter Griffiths, had called for the ‘strictest possible control of immigration’.¹⁶⁵ He was branded a ‘parliamentary leper by the new premier, Harold Wilson’.¹⁶⁶ Informally circulating in the background in Smethwick in 1963–4 was the slogan: ‘If you want a nigger

¹⁶⁴ Robert Pearce, 'Walker, Patrick Chrestien Gordon, Baron Gordon-Walker (1907–1980), Politician and Author', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/printable/31161>>, accessed 8 September 2013.

¹⁶⁵ 'Smethwick Division General Election 1964, Peter Griffiths—Your Conservative Candidate, Polling Day Thursday 15 October', [election address], Smethwick: C. E. A. Dickens, 1964.

¹⁶⁶ Dhani R. Prem, *The Parliamentary Leper: A history of colour prejudice in Britain* (Aligarh: Metric, 1965), 101.

neighbour—vote Labour’.¹⁶⁷ Despite the contemporary literature and continued references to the slogan in political discourse, the nature and scope of the Conservative campaign remains unclear. But in Griffiths’ own words:

I had been much criticised for refusing to condemn anyone who used the phrase. I still utterly deplore its use as a political rallying call but I will certainly not criticise those who use it to express their protest against politicians who preach a morality they are not called upon, by choice or circumstances, to practise.¹⁶⁸

Meanwhile Smethwick Labour Club continued to run a colour bar, prompting a further rebuke from Wilson and a split with the Smethwick Labour Party.¹⁶⁹ However, a past Labour councillor ran a whites-only youth club, with public support from a Labour alderman.¹⁷⁰ Other contemporary interviewees confirmed the tensions within the local Labour Party.¹⁷¹ As Foot pointed out, Gordon-Walker’s own, eve-of-poll leaflet had said:

Be fair. Immigrants only arrived in Smethwick in large numbers during the past ten years—while the Tory government was in power. You can’t blame Labour or Gordon-Walker for that. Labour favours continued control of immigration, stricter health checks and deportation of those convicted of criminal offences. Labour will give local authorities greater power to help overcrowding. Labour will provide new and better housing.¹⁷²

This appeared to echo Conservative blaming of immigrants for a range of problems, including crime. Thus in his ‘personal message’ within his final election address, Griffiths similarly wrote:

I shall press for the strictest possible control over immigration. . . . Overcrowding and dirty conditions must be ended. There must be no entry permits for criminals, the unhealthy and those unwilling to work. Our streets must again be safe at night.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁷ Cressida Dickens, 'Interview with Author', 11 October 2013; Ken Duffell, 'Interview with Author', 4 July 2013; Trevor Harris, 'Interview with Author', 10 September 2013; Severn, 'Interview'; 'Labour urges racial quiz', *Daily Mail*, 13 July 1963.

¹⁶⁸ Peter Griffiths, *A Question of Colour?* (London: Leslie Frewin, 1966), 171.

¹⁶⁹ Duffell, 'Interview'; 'Smethwick Labour club bans coloureds', *Daily Mail*, 14 November 1964; 'Smethwick rap', *Daily Mail*, 17 November 1964; 'Labour men quit colour bar club', *Daily Mail*, 18 November 1964; 'Labour Party quits colour bar club', *Daily Mail*, 21 November 1964.

¹⁷⁰ Paul Foot, *Immigration and Race in British Politics* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), 61, 74.

¹⁷¹ Roger Page, 'Interview with Author', 15 July 2013; Bob Badham, 'Interview with Author', 11 July 2013; Geoff Taylor, 'Interview with Author', 12 July 2013; Martin Prestidge, 'Interview with Author', 12 July 2013.

¹⁷² Foot, *Immigration and Race*, 59.

¹⁷³ 'Peter Griffiths—Your Conservative Candidate'.

23. The Smethwick Development Plan and 'overspill' housing

This note traces how postwar planners grossly over-estimated the future Smethwick population when determining the scale of housing redevelopment; and the relationship with long-term 'overspill' provision affecting neighbouring districts. Smethwick's first development plan was submitted to government in 1951 and approved with amendments in 1955. It was a requirement of the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, which it defined as 'a plan indicating the manner in which a local planning authority propose that land in their area should be used'.¹⁷⁴ The development plan consisted of a 'report of survey' providing background to the plan, but having no statutory effect; a 'written statement' proving a short summary of the main proposals, but no explanation or argument to support them; and detailed maps at various scales. The maps indicated development proposals for a twenty-year period and a staged implementation programme.¹⁷⁵ Like other early such plans, the Smethwick Development Plan took no account of the wider conurbation context, particularly neighbouring areas. Nor did it allow for the redevelopment of the Cape Hill shopping centre. This became significant when such a redevelopment plan was agreed by the Labour administration. This deeply unpopular scheme was dropped by the Conservatives in 1964.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ Barry Cullingworth and Vincent Nadin, *Town and Country Planning in the UK* (13th edn.; London: Routledge, 2002), 92-3.

¹⁷⁵ Cullingworth and Nadin, *Town and Country Planning* (13th edn.), 93.

¹⁷⁶ Page, 'Interview'; Prestidge, 'Interview'; 'Cape Hill redevelopment', *Smethwick Civic News*, March 1961.

Curiously, the original development plan cited a 1951 Registrar-General estimate for the population of 83,901, but elsewhere identified the 1951 population as 76,397.¹⁷⁷ This was the provisional census figure and the eventual figure published in 1954 was 76,407 (see Special Note 5). The plan referred to a Registrar-General population projection for 1971 of 83,390 based on 'natural causes' but not migration.¹⁷⁸ The plan therefore adjusted the projection for a net migration loss of 7,890 even though the actual loss of 1,371 for 1948–50 listed in the plan indicated a 20-year loss to 1971 of 9,140.¹⁷⁹ The chosen outflow figure combined with 2,500 'overspill' population thereby provided for a round 73,000 population estimate for 1971.

The Government reduced the 1971 population forecast to 70,000 when it approved the plan, a level retained when the plan was amended in 1960 to cover a further 15 years.¹⁸⁰ The council reported that the decision to reaffirm the 70,000 target was taken with regard to the Registrar General's revised estimate of the national increase in population and the estimated migration from the Borough'.¹⁸¹ This reflected an increase by 1960 in the overspill capacity on Smethwick-owned land in Oldbury and West Bromwich from 2,500 to 3,550 people, a decision based on plans to build at higher density.¹⁸² But maintaining the objective of a 70,000 population meant that in the Windmill Lane area that planned density would be little changed at 53.3 persons per acre, compared to 56.7 at the outset of

¹⁷⁷ Smethwick Corporation, 'The Survey and Written Analysis', [council report], *County Borough of Smethwick Development Plan*, Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1951, 1, 7.

¹⁷⁸ Smethwick Corporation, 'Survey and Written Analysis', 7.

¹⁷⁹ Smethwick Corporation, 'Survey and Written Analysis', Table 11 at 27, Table 13 at 28.

¹⁸⁰ 'Development Plan', *Smethwick Civic News*, July 1955; Smethwick Corporation, 'Written Statement Amendment No. (196)', [council report], *County Borough of Smethwick Development Plan*, Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1960, 2.

¹⁸¹ 'Amendment of Development Plan', *Smethwick Civic News*, July 1960.

¹⁸² 'Amendment of Development Plan', *Smethwick Civic News*.

redevelopment.¹⁸³ Significantly, these redevelopment areas contained 30.1 per cent of Smethwick's population; Birmingham's equivalent redevelopment areas while huge—containing 127,200 people—only accounted for 11.4 per cent of the city's population.¹⁸⁴

So system-build in Windmill Lane went hand-in-hand with continued 'overspill' housing schemes aggressively pursued, it must be said, by Smethwick Corporation.¹⁸⁵ In 1920 and 1926 it attempted to annexe Oldbury in its entirety.¹⁸⁶ After 1921 it persistently bought-up Oldbury farmland, building council housing without reference to its district council.¹⁸⁷ This created 'facts on the ground' and the eventual 1928 boundary adjustment encompassed these early schemes.¹⁸⁸ Overspill activity continued, with another 1,178

¹⁸³ Smethwick Corporation, 'Written Statement', [council report], *County Borough of Smethwick Development Plan*, Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1955, 7.

¹⁸⁴ Birmingham City Council, 'City of Birmingham Development Plan: Statement and maps as approved with modifications by the Minister for Housing and Local Government, December 1960', [government report], Birmingham: Birmingham City Council, 1961, 28.

¹⁸⁵ D. E. Yates and J.D. Halverson, *Building Bearwood: The why, how and who* (Smethwick: D. E. Yates, 1999), 37-45.

¹⁸⁶ Percy A. Grigg and Sydney Vernon, 'A Reply to a Representation or Memorial of the Mayor, Alderman and Burgesses of the County Borough of Smethwick, which Memorial dates the 23rd day of November 1920, for an alteration in the Boundary of the Borough to include the whole of the Urban District Council of Oldbury', [council report], Oldbury: Urban District Council of Oldbury, 1920; Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Council', [council report], Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, [1920–66], Minutes 15-16 of the Special Council Meeting held on 17 November 1926.

¹⁸⁷ Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', [council report], Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, [1920–66], Minute 9146: 'Purchase of Awefields Farm and Queens Head Farm', meeting held on 21 September 1921; Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', Minute 202: 'Purchase of Slatch House Estate', meeting held on 17 December 1924.

¹⁸⁸ Smethwick noted the 'apparently unanimous opposition of the Oldbury Council and the Worcestershire County Council to the scheme' making it almost impossible to carry it through Parliament. It agreed to amend the Smethwick Corporation Bill to stipulate a new boundary 'enclosing the Smethwick housing estate': Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Council', Minute 110 of the Quarterly Council Meeting held on 28 February 1927. The eventual compromise brokered by the Ministry of Health (the 'Gibbon Line') largely reflected this revised approach: Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the General Purposes Committee', [council report], Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, [1920–66], Supplemental minute: 'Smethwick Corporation Bill', meeting held on 21 March 1927; 'Greater Smethwick—Council Approves the "Gibbon Line"', *Smethwick Telephone*, 9 April 1927. These boundaries are shown in Figure 19.

municipal homes in Oldbury by the onset of war, mainly adjacent to Smethwick but also in Perry Hill, Brandhall.¹⁸⁹

Although joint planning arrangements were ostensibly in place in 1945, friction with Oldbury continued.¹⁹⁰ Smethwick in conjunction with West Bromwich made a bid in 1946 to annexe Oldbury as part of a continuous acquisition stretching from Halesowen to Aldridge.¹⁹¹ Early in 1951, Worcestershire County Council (WCC) as the primary planning authority argued Oldbury faced land shortages due to past Smethwick overspill and so opposed plans by Smethwick for another 350 houses.¹⁹² Difficult all-party discussions led to the regional office of the then Ministry of Local Government and Planning to conclude a longer-term conurbation approach was needed to address overspill.¹⁹³ In October 1951, Smethwick finally accepted a WCC proposal to transfer ownership of 34 acres from Oldbury

¹⁸⁹ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 121.

¹⁹⁰ From 1932, town planning for Smethwick was conducted jointly with Oldbury and West Bromwich, a trend that continued with education and fire services in the aftermath of the war: Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 119-20. One of several cases was the decision of Smethwick to exploit a Ministry of Health approval to ignore a Oldbury by-law requiring wider roads in Smethwick's new-build: Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', Minute 10811: 'Brandhall Road and Bleakhouse Road', meeting held on 9 October 1950. Such intra-authority tensions created a further argument for local government reorganisation. The aggressive approach to rent equalisation under the new Warley authority reportedly pursued by councillors from Rowley Regis and Oldbury, which led to suspension of Smethwick councillors from the Labour Group in 1966–67, may have been partly motivated by Smethwick's historical high-handedness: Page, 'Interview'; Duffell, 'Interview'; Prestidge, 'Interview'; Taylor, 'Interview'.

¹⁹¹ See Borough of Halesowen, 'The Local Government (Boundary Commission) Act 1946: Black Country Investigation—APPLICATION OF THE COUNTY BOROUGH OF SMETHWICK AND WEST BROMWICH to amalgamate and also incorporate the Borough of Oldbury and parts of the Boroughs of Bilston, Tipton, Wednesbury, Rowley Regis, Halesowen and the Urban Districts of Coseley and Aldridge and APPLICATION OF THE BOROUGH OF OLDBURY AND ROWLEY REGIS for the Boroughs of Oldbury, Rowley Regis and Halesowen to be united and constituted as a County Borough—OBSERVATIONS of the Borough of Halesowen', [council report], Halesowen: Borough of Halesowen, 1946.

¹⁹² As reported in Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', Minute 10988: 'Land at Perry Hill', meeting held on 23 January 1951.

¹⁹³ As reported in Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', Minute 11197: 'Land and Perry Hill', meeting held on 11 June 1951. The Ministry of Local Government and Planning was established in January 1951 when functions of the Ministry of Health, which had taken over the powers of the old Local Government Board, were merged with the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, which had been created in 1943. Its name was changed to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHLG) by the Conservatives after the October 1951 general election.

to Smethwick to allow 350 houses in return for Smethwick's existing Oldbury landholding, which included land acquired as far afield as Cakemore.¹⁹⁴

This arrangement enabled the development of high-quality traditional housing in Perry Hill and Kingsway during the decade. As seen, it was the erroneous assumptions of the 1960 Smethwick Development Plan that led to 402 additional system-built flats in Kingsway, mostly demolished within forty years.¹⁹⁵ Smethwick also built in West Bromwich after acquiring the Lyttleton Hall estate, with a further locality of steel houses that disappeared with the later construction of the M6.¹⁹⁶ The 1,314 postwar units took Smethwick's total overspill activity since 1920 to 3,497 dwellings (Table 34 and Figure 19).¹⁹⁷ Thus 41.4 per cent of Smethwick's council housing was built outside the successive borough area, a level similar to Manchester (43 per cent).¹⁹⁸ It was a factor in the borough's population decline from the 1920s: such schemes by 1966 contained c.7,450 people rehoused from Smethwick.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁴ Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', Minute 11465: 'Land at Perry Hill', meeting held on 8 October 1951.

¹⁹⁵ 'The Kingsway site', *Smethwick Civic News*, October 1962.

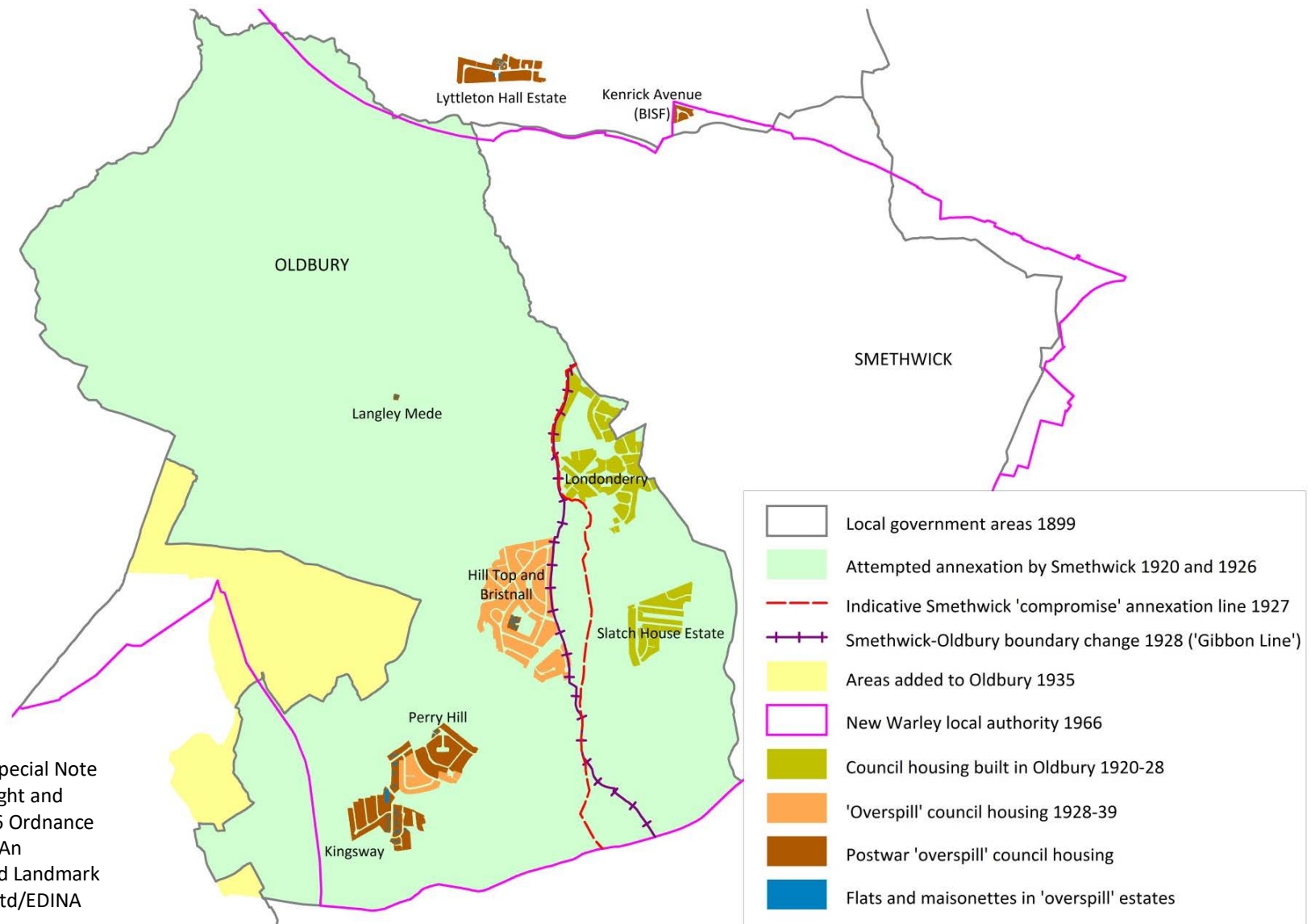
¹⁹⁶ These were steel-framed houses designed and produced by the British Iron and Steel Federation (BISF), and erected around the country from 1946.

¹⁹⁷ These being 2,492 extra-district units included in Table 33, plus the 1,005 built in Oldbury before the 1928 boundary transfer, as a proportion of total Smethwick municipal build of 8,446.

¹⁹⁸ Rodgers, 'Metropolitan Planning', 53.

¹⁹⁹ Population figure of 7,451 based on 2,492 extra-district units and estimated average household size of 2.99 in 1966, derived from interpolating the 1961 and 1971 censuses—see Special Note 5: Creating a Population time series for historic Smethwick.

Figure 19: Annexation and overspill housing by Smethwick, 1920–66



Source: See text in Special Note 23. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153. An Ordnance Survey and Landmark Information Group Ltd/EDINA supplied service.

Table 34: Smethwick Corporation housing build programme, 1920–66

	1920–39	1945–66	All years
Total municipal build	4,759 ^A	3,687 ^B	8,446
Historic Smethwick (1928 area)	3,581*	2,373	5,954
Oldbury	1,178	1,022 ^C	2,200
West Bromwich	0	292 ^C	292
Total extra-district	1,178 ^A	1,314	2,492
% extra-district	24.8	35.6	29.5

Base: new housing units built for rent from Smethwick Corporation.

^A G. C. Baugh, M. W. Greenslade, and D. A. Johnson, 'Smethwick', in M. W. Greenslade (ed.), *History of the County of Stafford* (The Victoria History of the Counties of England, XVII; London: University of London, Institute of Historical Research, 1976), 121.

^B K. W. Inskip, 'Smethwick from Hamlet to County Borough: A brief history', [research study], Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1966, 11.

^C Smethwick Corporation, 'Housing Act 1946—Register of new dwellings', [council report], Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1956; Smethwick Corporation, 'Housing Subsidies Act 1956—Register of new dwellings provided for slum and camp clearance, etc.', [council report], Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1962; Smethwick Corporation, 'Housing Subsidies Act 1956—Register of new dwellings provided for general needs', [council report], Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1964; Smethwick Corporation, 'Housing Act 1961—Register of new dwellings provided for general approved needs', [council report], Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1966.

*Includes 1,005 units built in Warley Woods ward in 1920–28 when this area formed part of Oldbury (see below).

This note concludes with a technical explanation of how this 'overspill' housing was identified. The primary source is the new property registers, produced by local authorities for housing built using exchequer subsidy under successive housing acts.²⁰⁰ Here a small adjustment (six properties) was made for obvious omissions and mispostings. A register of the 614 pre-1925 dwellings built under the Addison Act 1919 has unfortunately been lost.²⁰¹ However, it was possible to map the full 1920–28 period with confidence, based on stock references in housing committee minutes and dated photographic evidence.²⁰² Register

²⁰⁰ The author was first shown registers covering the former Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Tipton, Wednesbury and West Bromwich boroughs in 2008. They were languishing in a walk-in safe in an office at Smethwick Council House. Realising their vulnerability to casual disposal, he repeatedly pressed for their transfer to the Sandwell Community History and Archives Service and thankfully this was done in 2014.

²⁰¹ The 614 figure is cited in Smethwick Corporation, 'Smethwick Official Handbook', [council report], Cheltenham: Ed. J. Burrow, 1938, 22.

²⁰² *Black Country History*, <<http://www.blackcountryhistory.org/>>, Dudley Archives and Local History Service, Dudley Museums Service, Sandwell Community History and Archives Service, Sandwell Museums Service, Walsall Local History Centre, Walsall Museums Service, Wolverhampton Archives and Local Studies,

entries for interwar Brandhall stock are also missing, but committee minutes mention Bodenham Road, a development which is evident from a 1945 aerial picture.²⁰³ GIS mapping using historic Ordnance Survey series of the available 1928–39 register data, plus Bodenham Road identified 1,185 units, close to the reported Oldbury stock of 1,178 in 1939.²⁰⁴ The dataset produced from registers for the postwar period is consistent with the milestone of 1,854 reported in 1959.²⁰⁵ Figure 19, which maps some 3,500 overspill houses, can therefore be regarded as materially accurate. To clarify further, the map shows the overspill schemes built in Oldbury in 1920–28 in what became Warley Woods ward after the land transfer of 1928. Smethwick Corporation continued to build in Warley Woods up to 1939 and indeed postwar, but these were no longer ‘overspill’ schemes and are not mapped in Figure 19.

Wolverhampton Arts and Museums Service; *Britain from Above*, <<http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/>>, Historic Environment Scotland, Historic England and The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales.

²⁰³ Google, 'Bodenham Road area, Oldbury 1945: 52°28'07.05N 2°00'07.65W', *Google Earth* [showcase website], <<https://www.google.co.uk/earth/>>, accessed 19 March 2016.

²⁰⁴ Smethwick Corporation, 'Register of Properties provided by local authority under Housing Act 1924', [council report], Vol. I, Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1932; Smethwick Corporation, 'Register of Properties provided by local authority under 1924 Housing Act', [council report], Vol. II, Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1934; Smethwick Corporation, 'Register of new houses provided under Housing Act, 1930', [council report], Vol. I, Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1934; Smethwick Corporation, 'Register of new houses provided under Housing Act, 1930', [council report], Vol. II, Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1935; Smethwick Corporation, 'Register of new houses provided under Housing Act, 1930', [council report], Vol. III, Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1938.

²⁰⁵ Smethwick Corporation, 'Housing Act 1946—Register of new dwellings', [council report], Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1956; Smethwick Corporation, 'Housing Subsidies Act 1956—Register of new dwellings provided for slum and camp clearance, etc.', [council report], Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1962; Smethwick Corporation, 'Housing Subsidies Act 1956—Register of new dwellings provided for general needs', [council report], Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, 1964. Smethwick had 1,602 municipal houses in Oldbury and 252 in West Bromwich as overspill developments by 1959: Smethwick Corporation, 'Industrial Handbook (1959 edn.)', 64.

24. Housing Redevelopment and Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO)

This note discusses the formal policy applied to housing clearance and the strong underlying postwar belief in comprehensive redevelopment as a housing solution. Successive redevelopment areas were declared in Smethwick, along with compulsory purchase orders (CPOs), which included 'not-unfit' housing to create 'convenient' sites. Based on its statutory requirements, Smethwick identified 'clearance areas' where houses were assessed by public health inspectors as unfit for human habitation; that the suitable response was entire clearance which could be properly resourced, including rehousing those displaced. Adjacent houses found 'not unfit' could also be included for land assembly purposes, 'to secure an area of convenient size to be developed to the best possible advantage'.²⁰⁶

Different levels of compensation were paid for unfit houses (cleared-site value only) and additional fit houses (market value prior to any blight).²⁰⁷ The corporation was not required to consult with residents prior to declaring a clearance area, but the order had to be confirmed by the Minister. Objections were considered at a public local enquiry with a limited right of appeal.²⁰⁸ In opting for wholesale clearance (being as *Civic News* put it, 'the most satisfactory way of dealing with conditions in the local area is the demolition of all the buildings within it') there was no reference in the corporation's newsletter to possible alternatives.²⁰⁹ On the contrary, it was argued:

²⁰⁶ 'Slum clearance schemes', *Smethwick Civic News*, December 1958.

²⁰⁷ 'Slum clearance part 2: Compensation', *Smethwick Civic News*, August 1964.

²⁰⁸ 'Slum clearance part 1: The procedure for dealing with houses unfit for human habitation', *Smethwick Civic News*, July 1964.

²⁰⁹ 'Slum clearance schemes', *Smethwick Civic News*.

A programme of slum clearance of the magnitude of that which Smethwick Council must undertake cannot be accomplished without a measure of inconvenience to those to have to move their homes as a result of it. Bearing in mind, however, that modern, healthy dwelling will rise in place of the slums which are demolished, can there be anyone who really doubts its necessity and worth?²¹⁰

The associated municipal approach of 'building upwards' with multi-storey flats can be seen in Figure 20.

Figure 20: Slum Clearance 'Zeitgeist', c.1961



'Planners' Aim—No slums in a generation, c.1961', article spread placed by Smethwick Corporation], from Gary Robinson, *Race Relations in Smethwick*, 1962, [analysis of local newspaper articles by Jewish Youth Club, Manchester]. Reproduced with permission of Sandwell Community History and Archives Service: Ian Gray, 7 March 2016.

²¹⁰ 'Slum clearance part 2: Compensation', *Smethwick Civic News*.

25. Scale of Housing Clearance in Smethwick

Clearance in Smethwick over a 50-year period reached 10,664 homes in an area of four square miles (Table 35). This technical note outlines the basis of this calculation. In the five historic wards with lower levels of clearance of pre-war housing, site-level demolition activity was mapped and quantified. Clearance was also mapped in the other three wards, but was so significant that it was simpler to quantify the stock surviving from 1951.

Mapping was undertaken from large-scale Ordnance Survey sheets using GIS. Table 35 indicates that 36.5 per cent of the housing stock existing in 1951 was subsequently cleared across Smethwick. This ranged from 94.2 per cent in Victoria and 84.2 per cent in Sandwell wards to 1.7 per cent in Warley Woods and 1.5 per cent in Bearwood.

Table 35: Housing Clearance in Smethwick, 1951 to 2011

	Dwellings cleared
Private housing clearance 1951–85, historic Smethwick	6,050
Private housing clearance 1986–2011, historic Smethwick	1,538
Private housing clearance in ex-Birmingham areas 1951–2011	425
Council housing clearance 1988–2011, historic Smethwick	2,387
Temporary municipal housing ('prefabs') removed by c.1974 ^A	264
Total clearance in Smethwick area 1951–2011	10,664

Base: Structurally separate dwellings.

Source: Sandwell MBC, 'Unfit Housing Clearance Programme 1986 to 1992 (Plus Supplementary List): Report of the Director of Environmental Services', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 1985; Patricia McCullagh, 'Planning data for Smethwick research', [personal communication to author], 2 May 2013. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. Landmark Information Group Ltd/EDINA and UK Data Service products. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153. Also see Special Note 4: Defining Smethwick—Changing boundaries and area identity.

^A Includes 12 'prefabs' in ex-Birmingham areas.

Most of the 7,840 private clearance in historic Smethwick was undertaken between 1951 and 1985, when 6,302 units were removed. To this can be added the clearance prior to 1966 in the ex-Birmingham areas of Smethwick (425 private and 12 'prefabs'). The private housing cleared in 1986 to 2011 was calculated as above, but triangulated with the original local authority clearance plan for this period; together with site-level council planning records from 1988 to 2011.²¹¹ The figure of 2,387 cleared council housing in 1988–2011 is also based on planning records and triangulated using GIS.²¹²

²¹¹ Sandwell MBC, 'Unfit Housing Clearance Programme 1986 to 1992 (Plus Supplementary List): Report of the Director of Environmental Services', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 1985.

²¹² Patricia McCullagh, 'Planning data for Smethwick research', [personal communication to author], 2 May 2013.

Table 36: Ward-based calculation of Housing Clearance in Smethwick, 1951 to 2011

Historic ward	1951 total stock (units)	Mapped clearance of pre-1945 stock (units)	1945-51 'prefabs' cleared (units)	Mapped surviving 1951 stock (units)	Implied surviving 1951 stock in 2011 (units)	Total clearance of 1951 stock (units)	% of 1951 stock cleared (ranked)
Victoria	2,145	—	9	125	125	2,020	94.2
Sandwell	2,222	—	41	352	352	1,870	84.2
Soho	1,966	—	0	651	651	1,315	66.9
Spon Lane	3,517	1,170	144	—	2,203	1,314	37.4
Cape	2,411	795	0	—	1,616	795	33.0
Uplands	2,715	416	4	—	2,295	420	15.5
Warley Woods	4,400	19	54	—	4,327	73	1.7
Bearwood	2,131	33	0	—	2,098	33	1.5
Total	21,507	2,433	252	1,128	13,667	7,840	36.5

Base: Structurally separate dwellings.

Source: See Table 35; 1951 baseline from General Register Office, 'Census 1951 England and Wales: County Report—Staffordshire', Table 10.

Note: Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

26. Municipal Housing schemes in Warley

This note identifies the policy background to the continued oversupply of municipal housing in Smethwick under the new Warley local authority. The first Warley municipal new-build programme was developed in the absence of a plan to guide clearance and build rates (see Special Note 27). Instead it reflected a political commitment to maintain the five-year programmes of the previous local authorities and to locate them proportionately. So for Rowley Regis 200; Oldbury 230; and Smethwick 820 units annually, although the basis of the Smethwick figure now appears unclear.²¹³

When the development plan was revised in 1960, Smethwick Corporation advised the Ministry for Housing and Local Government (MHLG) that it planned to clear 1,881 unfit properties by 1975.²¹⁴ In 1962, Smethwick identified a five-year draft clearance programme which envisaged 2,373 demolitions by 1967 (1,265 being unfit and 1,108 being fit), subject to formal CPO processes, with rehousing complete by 1970. The new-build programme for 1963-70 assumed 2,685 dwellings: a net gain of 312.²¹⁵ It was equivalent to an annual completion rate of 376, rather than the later benchmark of 820 invoked in 1966.

²¹³ Warley Corporation, 'County Borough of Warley: Minutes of the Housing Development Committee', [council report], Smethwick: Warley Corporation, [1966–74], Minute 243/66 (Housing Programme): meeting held on 7 November 1966.

²¹⁴ Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', Minute 18337 (Future Housing Schemes): meeting held on 7 November 1960.

²¹⁵ Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Development Plan and Slum Clearance Advisory Sub-Committee', [council report], Smethwick: Smethwick Corporation, [1961–66], Minute 3 (Slum Clearance Programme): meeting held on 1 October 1962.

There are no further references to five-year build programmes in the Smethwick housing committee minutes to 1966. The 820 rate suggests 4,100 completions: an unlikely total in clearance areas yielding some 2,373 dwellings, unless fresh clearance was later contemplated. Yet all but one of the eight clearance areas in the 1962 programmes had CPOs in place by 1966. The last, the Union Street area, was declared by Warley Corporation; Warley did not declare any additional clearance areas in Smethwick.

27. The Warley Structure Plan

This note indicates how the oversupply of municipal housing in Smethwick was compounded by further flawed population projections by local authority planners. The Smethwick Development Plan as revised in 1960 was duly made obsolete by local government reorganisation in 1966. In all, Warley inherited development plans from Smethwick and two county councils in respect of Oldbury and Rowley Regis. However, legislation in 1968 created a two-tier planning system of structure plans and local plans. The structure plan was concerned with strategic location, made use of diagrams not maps, and was not site-specific. The local plan provided detailed guidance on land use in a format similar to previous development plans.²¹⁶ Warley planners had commenced work on a new development plan in 1966, but this was halted by the 1968 legislation.²¹⁷

²¹⁶ Cullingworth and Nadin, *'Town and Country Planning (13th edn.)'*, 93-4.

²¹⁷ Warley Corporation, *'Official Guide (1967 edn.)'*, 25.

The Warley Structure Plan expected population growth to 1991, when instead it significantly declined due to continued outmigration.²¹⁸ So the plan considered a range of longer-term scenarios, but its 'most likely projection' was of a 6,900 population increase to 1991—the outturn was a decline of 19,200.²¹⁹ Following significant expected build (5,917) and clearance activity (5,019) it projected a stock of 59,514, which would be subject to a 3 per cent void rate.²²⁰ In 1991, the actual stock in the Warley area (based on best-fit Sandwell wards) was remarkably close, albeit for the wrong reasons, at 59,428. In the intervening time, the population had fallen to 141,889. Only a drop in average household size from 2.85 to 2.55 restricted the Warley area void rate in 1991 to 6.1 per cent.²²¹ In Smethwick, however, it reached 9.8 per cent. Nonetheless, this population forecast was not criticised at the original public examination.²²²

²¹⁸ Warley Corporation, 'Report of Survey: Housing', [council report], *Warley Structure Plan*, Smethwick: Warley Corporation, 1973, Table 18 potential households 1971-91.

²¹⁹ The plan predicted a population growth in Warley from 161,080 in 1971 to 168,006 in 1991 in 51,900 households (with a rise in average household size to 3.24): Warley Corporation, 'Housing', Table 18 potential households 1971-91.

²²⁰ Warley Corporation, 'Housing', Table 26 estimated future dwelling stock based on current proposals.

²²¹ Data for twelve southern Sandwell wards closely matching the historic Warley area from: Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 'Census 1991 England and Wales: Standard Area Tables', Table S610029. Adapted census data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016.

²²² Iain Glidewell, Gilbert Shoebridge, and Christine Mill, 'Structure Plans for Birmingham, Dudley, Walsall, Warley, West Bromwich and Wolverhampton: Examination in Public', [government report], Birmingham: Department of the Environment, West Midlands Regional Office, 1976.

28. Sandwell Planning Policy relating to Smethwick

A survey of planning policy for Smethwick shows that after 1960, no town-specific, adopted local planning framework was produced until 2008 for an area undergoing major physical, social and economic change. The Warley plan discussed in Special Note 27 was subsumed into the structure plan for the new West Midlands County Council.²²³ After 1974, Sandwell MBC then produced several local plans, but none covered Smethwick.²²⁴ Following the abolition of the county council in 1986, the first district-wide, unitary development plan (UDP) was completed in 1995, in line with national requirements.²²⁵ This process was hampered by the imposition of the Black Country Development Corporation in 1987, a body with land vesting and development control powers.²²⁶ Alongside an updated Sandwell UDP in 2004, a Smethwick Town Plan was produced as supplementary planning guidance.²²⁷ This proved problematic, and it was replaced by the Smethwick Area Action Plan (AAP) in 2008, forming a component of the Black Country Core Strategy in 2011.²²⁸ At 2015, the Smethwick Area Action Plan was still the adopted plan for Smethwick and the allocations

²²³ Glidewell, Shoebridge *et al.*, 'Structure Plans', 1; 'Notice of repeal and replacement of structure plans and approval of structure plan—Town and Country Planning Act 1971—The West Midlands County Structure Plan, West Midlands County Council', *London Gazette*, 26 March 1982.

²²⁴ West Midlands County Council, 'Report of Survey: Inner Areas', [government report], *County Structure Plan*, Birmingham: WMCC, 1978, 17; Hayley Insley, 'Planning documents and planning-related studies covering Smethwick', [personal communication to author], 27-28 November 2013.

²²⁵ Sandwell MBC, 'Unitary Development Plan—Written Statement, Proposals Map and Inset Plans', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, Planning and Development Services, 1995.

²²⁶ Brendan Nevin, Patrick Loftman, and Alan Middleton, 'The Black Country Development Corporation and the Sandwell Housing Action Trust: An impact assessment of central government initiatives on the local urban policy frame', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Birmingham Polytechnic, Faculty of the Built Environment, 1991, 48.

²²⁷ Sandwell MBC, 'Unitary Development Plan—Written Statement, Proposals Map and Inset Plans', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, Planning and Development Services, 2004; Sandwell MBC, 'Smethwick Town Plan', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 2004.

²²⁸ David Rhead, 'North Smethwick Canalside, Smethwick, West Midlands Gateway 1, Acceptance for Appraisal Report to Projects Executive, 13 March 2007', [HCA internal report], Birmingham: English Partnerships, 2007; Sandwell MBC Dudley MBC, Walsall MBC, Wolverhampton City Council, 'Black Country Core Strategy', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2011. The Town Plan was soon superseded: Sandwell MBC, 'Smethwick Area Action Plan—Development Plan Document', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 2008.

remained as set out in the AAP. The Smethwick AAP had been incorporated within the Sandwell Site and Allocations Development Plan.²²⁹ These, together with the Black Country Core Strategy, formed the Development Plan for Sandwell.

29. Smethwick 'Masterplans' and their Legacy

These notes on the unfortunate legacy of planning policy affecting Smethwick conclude with the extensive recourse in Sandwell to technocratic, area 'masterplans'. When interviewed, Dutton identified the widespread use of consultants for studies and plans, viewing them a sign of ineffectual management and staff turnover; and the spreading of effort too thinly across Sandwell.²³⁰ He argued, however, that using consultants in this way was widespread across local government, a feature of what Imrie termed 'benevolent expertism'.²³¹ Dutton cited the case of a commissioning proposal passed to him, as an Executive Director at Newham Council, for a Royal Docks masterplan, which included a list of 71 previous masterplans, frameworks and studies.²³² Some 60 such plans for Smethwick were identified in this research, dating back to the 1980s but gathering pace in the 2000s (Table 37). These are policy documents and policy/strategy forming studies for Smethwick with a direct focus on changing land use and physical regeneration. Plans relating to operational delivery issues and project appraisals, general research or subsequent evaluation studies are omitted. This list, which is inevitably subjective and likely to be partial, is nevertheless cast

²²⁹ Sandwell MBC, 'Site Allocations and Delivery Plan Document', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2012.

²³⁰ Clive Dutton, 'Interview with Author', 30 August 2013.

²³¹ Rob Imrie, 'Governing the Cities and the Urban Renaissance', in Craig Johnstone and Mark Whitehead (eds.), *New Horizons in British Urban Policy: Perspectives on New Labour's urban renaissance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 138.

²³² Clive Dutton, 'Smethwick plan proliferation and the 71 Newham studies', [personal communication to author], 27 November 2013.

wider than pure 'masterplans' to be comparable with the Newham example and to illustrate 'benevolent expertism' in Smethwick.

The acceleration of masterplans in the 2000s was partly due to the efforts of Smethwick SRB4 and then two delivery vehicles, Regenco and Urban Living, to catalyse development (Chapter 4 of the thesis). But the core local authority would not be influenced in this way; the approach misunderstood the nature of policy and implementation; and underlying strategic priorities, which did not proceed from idealised plans.²³³ As Towe put it, explaining the demise of the SRB4 partnership board after 2002:

The concept was right; the difficulty was that it was out of sync with local and national government thinking to be that local. The tendency was to look at things regionally and sub-regionally. We were ploughing a furrow that was not necessarily recognised or welcomed across the board.²³⁴

Masterplans were nonetheless encouraged by the local authority, in a culture captured by John: 'Always have a plan, even if it's only a plan to have a plan'.²³⁵ Yet one judgment made in 2013 on the masterplan for Windmill Lane adopted just two years earlier is worth quoting in full:

The existence of a neighbourhood plan for Smethwick is irrelevant. The council has spent whatever it has spent getting a neighbourhood plan together. It didn't need it then; it doesn't need it now, because it doesn't do anything; it doesn't justify spend at all. It came at a time when public investment was drying up and it raised people's expectations of what we were going to do. But strangely enough, people never refer to it. I might want to refer to the Smethwick neighbourhood plan if it's needed in a funding document or something, but as a policy document it has no purpose.²³⁶

²³³ Dutton, 'Interview'.

²³⁴ Stewart Towe, 'Interview with Author', 28 August 2013.

²³⁵ 'Urban Living: The Legacy—Sharing Good Practice event', [PowerPoint slide], from Peter John, *Looking Forward—Regeneration in East Sandwell, Presentation by the Director of Partnerships and Housing*, 17 November 2010. © Sandwell MBC. Reproduced under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0. .

²³⁶ Anonymised officer comment.

Mistry similarly observed in 2013 that elements of the plan and its associated commitments had already frayed. For example, a pledge to involve residents in the selection of the developer for the vacant sites was not kept, however technical and/or self-evident the appointment process may have been. Other areas previously masterplanned in Sandwell did not have resident steering groups and therefore lacked community involvement in their developer selection, so it reportedly could not be done in Windmill Lane.²³⁷

Table 37: List of 60 ‘masterplans’ and related studies for Smethwick

Alan Baxter and Associates, 'North Smethwick Transport Plan', [consultancy report], 2003.
Alan Baxter and Associates, 'Soho Foundry Study', [consultancy report], n.d.
Atkins, 'North Smethwick Planning Framework', [consultancy report], London: Atkins, 2007.
Austin Smith Lord, 'North Smethwick Canalside: North Smethwick Heritage Assessment', [consultancy report], 2007.
Building Design Partnership and King Sturge LLP, 'Smethwick Soho Park Final Masterplan Report', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Building Design Partnership, 2008.
Building Design Partnership and EKOSGEN, 'Western Growth Corridor: Baseline study and issues paper', [consultancy report], 2010.
CgMs Consulting, 'Smethwick Conservation Area Character Appraisal: Executive Summary', [consultancy report], London: CgMs Consulting, 2005.
CSR Partnership, '"Regenerating Smethwick" Strategic Framework—Final Report', [consultancy report], Birmingham: CSR Partnership, 1999.
CSR Partnership, 'An Outline Strategy for Smethwick Town: Smethwick Regeneration Partnership', [consultancy report], Birmingham: CSR Partnership, 2000.
CSR Partnership, 'Sandwell Housing Demand Study: Appendix 1 Housing management data', [consultancy report], Birmingham CSR Partnership, 2000.
CSR Partnership and Llewelyn-Davies, 'Smethwick Regeneration Strategy: Masterplan', [consultancy report], Birmingham CSR Partnership, 2000.
CSR Partnership and Llewelyn-Davies, 'Smethwick Regeneration Strategy: Implementation Plan', [consultancy report], Smethwick: Smethwick Regeneration Partnership, 2000.
CSR Partnership, 'Report on Board Away Day, 27 June 2002: Achievement to date, forward strategy and the future roles and responsibilities of Smethwick Regeneration Partnership', [consultancy report], Birmingham: CSR Partnership, 2002.
CSR Partnership, 'North Smethwick Canalside Delivery Plan', [consultancy report], Birmingham: CSR Partnership, 2003.
CZWG Architects, 'North Smethwick Canalside Strategic Vision', [consultancy report], 2006.
DTZ Pieda Consulting, 'Unlocking the Potential of Local Centres across the Smethwick and North West Birmingham Areas', [consultancy report], Birmingham: DTZ Pieda Consulting, 2003.

²³⁷ Rohit Mistry, 'Interview with Author', 21 May 2013; Aynols Reid, 'Interview with Author', 13 February 2014.

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- Dudley MBC, Sandwell MBC, Walsall MBC, Wolverhampton City Council, 'Black Country Core Strategy', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2011.
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- EKOS Consulting, 'Urban Living: Smethwick area investment plan, 2006–08', [consultancy report], Glasgow: EKOS, 2005.
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- FDG Fairhursts, 'Grove Lane Masterplan Conceptual Options', [consultancy report], Manchester: FDG Fairhursts, 2008.
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- FDG Fairhursts, 'Grove Lane Masterplan Option 6 Appraisal', [consultancy report], Manchester: FDG Fairhursts, 2008.
-
- Jacobs Consultancy, 'North Smethwick Canalside Access Strategy: Design and business case', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Jacobs Consultancy, 2005.
-
- King Sturge, 'Soho Park Masterplan Options Appraisal: Draft report', [consultancy report], Leeds: King Sturge, 2007.
-
- Knight Frank, 'North Smethwick Residential Market Analysis', [consultancy report], Leeds: Knight Frank, 2006.
-
- L&R Consulting, 'Soho Foundry Re-Use Strategy', [consultancy report], n.d.
-
- Mott McDonald, 'North Smethwick Transportation Study: Consultation summary', [consultancy report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 1996.
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- Nevin, Brendan, 'East Sandwell Partnership—A Multi-Agency Strategy for Renewal and Investment: City Challenge preliminary submission, July 1991', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Birmingham Polytechnic, Faculty of the Built Environment, 1991.
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- North Smethwick Regeneration Group, 'North Smethwick Regeneration Strategy: Draft for consultation', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, Sandwell Regeneration Partnership, 1997.
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- Price Waterhouse, 'Main Report: Proposed Sandwell Housing Action Trust: Report of the study by a team led by independent consultants Price Waterhouse', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Department of the Environment, West Midlands Regional Office, 1988.
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- Price Waterhouse, 'Proposed Sandwell Housing Action Trust: Report of the supplementary study of the wider Cape Hill area by a team led by independent consultants Price Waterhouse', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Department of the Environment, West Midlands Regional Office, 1989.
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- PricewaterhouseCoopers, 'Windmill Eye Feasibility Study: Draft report', [consultancy report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2007.
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- PROBE, 'Windmill Lane and Lion Farm: Regeneration proposals', [consultancy report], n.p.: PROBE, 1989.
-
- PROBE, 'Black Patch Renewal and Strategy', [consultancy report], n.p.: PROBE, 1989.
-
- RegenCo: Sandwell Urban Regeneration Company, 'Business Plan 2007/08 to 2009/10', [corporate document], West Bromwich: RegenCo, 2007.
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- Sandwell MBC, 'Falling Rolls in Secondary Schools—Smethwick Area: Report to Schools Sub-Committee, 10 March 1982', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 1982.
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- Sandwell MBC, 'Unfit Housing Clearance Programme 1986 to 1992 (Plus Supplementary List): Report of the Director of Environmental Services', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 1985.
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- Sandwell MBC, 'The Smethwick Initiative: Report to Policy Committee, 3 July 1989', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 1989.
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- Sandwell MBC, 'Education Into the 1990s and Beyond: Responses and Recommendations', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, Education Department, 1990.
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- Sandwell MBC, 'South East District Strategy Statement', [council report], Smethwick: Sandwell
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MBC, Housing Department, 1993.
Sandwell MBC, 'Unitary Development Plan Written Statement, Proposals Map and Inset Plans', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, Planning and Development Services, 1995.
Sandwell MBC, 'Draft Smethwick Masterplan', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 1999.
Sandwell MBC, 'Draft Junction 1 Study for Public Consultation', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 1999.
Sandwell MBC, 'Towards a Housing Strategy for Smethwick', [council report], Smethwick: Sandwell MBC, Housing Strategy and Enabling Division, 2002.
Sandwell MBC, 'Smethwick Summit, Galton Valley, Conservation Area: Appraisal and Boundary Review', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2003.
Sandwell MBC, 'Smethwick Town Plan', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 2004.
Sandwell MBC, 'Unitary Development Plan—Written Statement, Proposals Map and Inset Plans', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, Planning and Development Services, 2004.
Sandwell MBC, 'Sandwell Housing Market Renewal Area Pathfinder Scheme: Historic Urban Characterisation Project', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2005.
Sandwell MBC, 'Smethwick Area Action Plan—Development Plan Document', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 2008.
Sandwell MBC, 'Smethwick Windmill Eye Neighbourhood Plan—Supplementary Planning Guidance', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, 2011.
Sandwell MBC, 'Grove Lane Smethwick—Adopted Supplementary Planning Document', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2011.
Sandwell MBC, 'Site Allocations and Delivery Plan Document', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2012.
Savills, 'Delivery Strategy for the Regeneration of Rolfe Street, Smethwick', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Savills and Complex Development Projects, 2010.
Savills Commercial and Glenn Howells Architects, 'Rolfe Street Options Appraisal: A delivery plan for the regeneration of Rolfe Street, Smethwick', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Savills Commercial, 2008.
Taylor Young and DTZ Pleda Consulting, 'Sandwell URC Regeneration Framework—Final Report', [consultancy report], Birmingham: DTZ Debenham Tie Leung Limited, 2004.
Taylor Young, Lambert Smith Hampton, and Halcrow, 'Urban Living in Smethwick—Area Framework', [consultancy report], London: Taylor Young, 2004.
Taylor Young, 'Smethwick Spatial Intervention Area Business Plan 2008–11', [consultancy report], London: Taylor Young, 2007.
Thomas Lister and Atkins, 'Masterplan and Delivery Strategy—Grove Lane Smethwick', [consultancy report], Bromsgrove: Thomas Lister, 2010.
Upson, Anne, 'Smethwick Summit Galton Valley—Conservation Area Appraisal', [consultancy report], Alderton: Anne Upson, 2002.
Upson, Anne, 'Soho Technology Park Historic Landscape Appraisal', [consultancy report], Alderton: Anne Upson, 2002.
Urban Initiatives, 'Smethwick Windmill Eye Neighbourhood Plan', [consultancy report], London: Urban Initiatives, 2011.
Urban Living: Birmingham-Sandwell Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder, 'Business Plan 2009–2011', [council report], Smethwick: Urban Living, 2009.

30. Mapping area-based initiatives (ABIs) in Sandwell

This note summarises the research undertaken to recreate a profile of past regeneration schemes in Sandwell. After the end of national urban policy in 2010, neither the council nor central government could list the type, location and funding value of past ABIs in Sandwell.²³⁸ Should this be surprising? Schemes were alternatively identified from a wide variety of reports and maps gathered for the research and through the author's personal knowledge as a past regeneration consultant operating in Sandwell. Christine Wright, Sandwell MBC, a research officer kindly provided the boundaries of many ABIs digitised for use in GIS.²³⁹ Some thirty-seven separate regeneration and housing schemes dating back to 1974 were consequently mapped through this research, as Figures 4.16 to 4.20 in Chapter 4. This list is almost certainly incomplete. Six effectively covered all of Sandwell and seven were designated zones, some covering most of the local authority area. But most covered localities: the conventional ABIs of neighbourhoods or neighbourhood clusters (Table 38). In all, the research mapped 100 discrete geographies targeted by the 37 ABIs, with some places by multiple initiatives, with Harvills Hawthorn in West Bromwich being a notable example.

²³⁸ The CLG did provide some information partly based on responses to parliamentary questions but it was partial and in places inaccurate: Department of Communities and Local Government, 'Response to Mr Adam Carey Fol request – Ref F0007463 on Sandwell urban regeneration funding', [personal communication to author], 31 January 2014; The Sandwell planners did not hold an ABI listing: Hayley Insley, 'Smethwick and Sandwell area-based initiatives and SMBC funding', [personal communication to author], 8 November 2013. The external funding team's grant claim register only dated back to 2006/07: Judith Wick, 'Area-based regeneration initiatives and funding in Sandwell [ILO: UNCLASSIFIED]', [personal communication to author], 19 June 2015.

²³⁹ The point here is the loss of institutional memory, since freedom of information requests did not identify the GIS maps—Wheatley was a personal contact of the author.

Table 38: Identified Area-based Initiatives (ABIs) in Sandwell, 1974 to 2011

Type of programme and specific initiative	Spatial basis	Covering Smethwick	Discrete geographies
Housing programmes in Sandwell, 1974–98			
General Improvement Areas	Locality	✓	4
Housing Action Areas	Locality	✓	4
Cape Hill Renewal Area	Locality	✓	4
Estate Action schemes	Locality	✓	13
Estates Renewal Challenge Fund	Locality	✓	5
Social, environment and community regeneration programmes in Sandwell, 1983–94			
Urban Programme comprehensive action and target areas	Locality	✓	7
Community Links West Smethwick	Locality	✓	1
Government-designated bodies in Sandwell, 1987–98			
Black Country Development Corporation	Zone	✓	1
Area-based initiatives and structural funds in Sandwell, 1990s			
Tipton City Challenge Round 2	Locality		1
Single Regeneration Budget Round 1	Locality	✓	3
Single Regeneration Budget Round 2	District		1
Single Regeneration Budget Round 3	District		1
Community Links Tipton	Locality		1
Community Links Cradley Heath	Locality		1
Advantage West Midlands Regeneration Zone	Zone	✓	1
European Regional Development Fund	Zone	✓	1
European Social Fund	District		1
Area-based initiatives and delivery vehicles in Sandwell, 1998–2011			
Smethwick Single Regeneration Budget Round 4	Locality	✓	1
Single Regeneration Budget Round 5	District		1
Single Regeneration Budget Round 6	District		1
Sandwell Health Action Zone	District		1
Wednesbury Education Action Zone	Locality		1
Tantany and Beeches Road Community Renewal Scheme	Locality		1
Cradley Heath and Oldbury Street Wardens	Locality		2
Neighbourhood Management Schemes	Locality	✓	13
Children's Fund	Locality	✓	8
On Track Scheme	Locality		1
Sure Start Areas	Locality	✓	10
Greets Green New Deal for Communities	Locality		1
Lyng Community Association	Locality		1
Community Links Lyng	Locality		1
Harvills Hawthorn and Millfields Housing PFI	Locality		2
Neighbourhood Renewal Fund	Zone	✓	1

Type of programme and specific initiative	Spatial basis	Covering Smethwick	Discrete geographies
Working Neighbourhoods Fund	Zone	✓	1
West Bromwich Town Centre	Locality		1
Urban Living Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder	Zone	✓	1
Regenco Urban Regeneration Company	Zone	✓	1
Total			100

Source: Christine Wright, *'Boundaries of Area-based Initiatives (ABIs) in Sandwell, Black Country and Birmingham'*, [TAB file geospatial data], digitised 1992–2009. Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153. An Ordnance Survey and Sandwell MBC supplied service, 21 November 2013; Carey, Adam, *'Boundaries of Area-based Initiatives (ABIs) in Sandwell, Black Country and Birmingham'*, [TAB geospatial data], digitised 2000–16 using a wide-variety of paper and electronic public sector documents. Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.
Note: This Table supports Figures 4.16 to Figure 4.20, Chapter 4.

31. The Sandwell 'Six Towns' and the politics of 'envy' and 'closure'

This note further explores the ambiguous position of the former six towns in Sandwell, as manifested in regeneration activity and the management of place. The underlying issue is suggested by a disclaimer on a council map:

These are the Six Towns of Sandwell, defined by the council as a way of developing local services and promoting community development. The Six Towns currently exist primarily as concept; they do not necessarily define organisational arrangements on the ground, and may not coincide with other organisations' structures.²⁴⁰

Area approaches in Sandwell after 1974 were arguably both complex and threatening to existing structural and professional arrangements operating with different 'assumptive worlds' and existing delivery pressures.²⁴¹ Khamis reflected that while the council recognised the quality of the local relationships in Smethwick by the 2000s, the apparent need for 'balance' across the towns prevented different treatment:

I talked to [a Sandwell chief officer] about SRB succession and pressed how good the public-private-voluntary sector partnership was; the real feeling of togetherness. So keep this, back it and give it an ongoing role in the town structures. Their reaction was: 'Oh, we've got real difficulties because none of the other towns is ready for a partnership like that'.²⁴²

²⁴⁰ Sandwell MBC, *'Map of Six Towns and Neighbourhoods of Sandwell'*, 2001.

²⁴¹ Ged Lucas, 'Interview with Author', 17 October 2013.

²⁴² Khamis, 'Interviews'.

Khamis also detected an underlying view to ‘want something “convenient for us as officers to manage: we need to coordinate with other public agencies, but all this partnership stuff is too hard”’.²⁴³

So in 2007, the Smethwick Town Team had an upwards relationship to the ‘people’ and ‘place’ groups of the Sandwell Partnership. It supervised a ‘learning panel’ to drive activity, but this appeared to be mainly monitoring locally-allocated NRF funding awarded to Smethwick. Eling was particularly candid on the political dimension:

The political problem of continuing with a self-styled executive board for the area, particularly at that time, was that you’d have had the argument that if you needed to do it in Smethwick you needed one in West Bromwich; and then one for Rowley and so on. You could do it while it was a government programme, because you could blame it on being a requirement of the government.²⁴⁴

Following the closure of the town committees, a town lead member role was established, with a link to area directors in the council executive after 2011.²⁴⁵ A new executive role of Regeneration and Economy was allocated area responsibility for West Bromwich and Smethwick.²⁴⁶ In 2014, a base was opened in each town for ward neighbourhood officers covering: street services; welfare, jobs and housing advice; with the potential to add planning, private sector housing and trading standards.²⁴⁷ ‘Sandwell Smethwick Local’ was accordingly based at Smethwick Council House.²⁴⁸

²⁴³ Khamis, 'Interviews'.

²⁴⁴ Steve Eling, 'Interviews with Author', 18 July and 11 September 2013.

²⁴⁵ Darren Cooper, 'Interviews with Author', 10 July and 11 September 2013; Roger Horton, 'Interview with Author', 31 July 2013.

²⁴⁶ Nick Bubalo, 'Interview with Author', 14 October 2013.

²⁴⁷ Sandwell MBC, 'Neighbourhood Working in Sandwell: Cabinet and Management Board Summit, 18 December 2013', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2013.

²⁴⁸ 'Sandwell Local: Bringing services closer to communities', *Sandwell Herald*, Spring 2014, 15; 'Sandwell Local: Bringing services closer to you', *Sandwell Herald*, Autumn 2014, 20; 'Who's your neighbourhood officer?', *Sandwell Herald*, Winter 2014, 17.

32. Urban Living and Community Engagement

The Urban Living housing programme may have been, as the local MP speculated, an ‘alibi’ for ineffective wider governance.²⁴⁹ Urban Living continued to be criticised for limited community engagement activity five years into its life.²⁵⁰ Yet by 2010 it achieved the highest Audit Commission rating for its approach to community cohesion, consultation and support, mainly for progress made on the Birmingham side.²⁵¹ Urban Living was able to support capital investment in Lozells in Birmingham, through harnessing the strong relationships arising from the neighbourhood management initiative in Lozells and areas in North West Birmingham. Physical investment in Summerfield in Birmingham was also closely shaped by a local residents’ association and was scaled-up into an ‘eco-village’.²⁵² Both initiatives drew critical acclaim, with local leaders also joining the Urban Living board as its first community representatives. There was no opportunity to do this in Smethwick because of a partnership void left after SRB4.

²⁴⁹ John Spellar, 'Meeting with Author', 27 January 2009.

²⁵⁰ Audit Commission, 'Market Renewal: Urban Living', [government report], *Strategic Review: February 2006*, London: Audit Commission, 2006, 12; Audit Commission, 'Market Renewal: Urban Living', [government report], *Strategic Review: December 2006*, London: Audit Commission, 2006, 12; Audit Commission, 'Market Renewal: Urban Living', [government report], *Performance Review: September 2007*, London: Audit Commission, 2007, 13, 15; Audit Commission, 'Market Renewal: Urban Living', [government report], *Strategic Review: February 2008*, London: Audit Commission, 2008; Audit Commission, 'Market Renewal: Urban Living', [government report], *Market Renewal Pathfinders' Performance Reviews 2008*, London: Audit Commission, 2008, 6.

²⁵¹ Audit Commission, 'Urban Living, March 2010', [government report], *HMR Performance Review 2009*, London: Audit Commission, 2010, 8.

²⁵² Birmingham City Council, 'Laying the Foundations of Localism: 18 months of neighbourhood management in Birmingham priority neighbourhoods, 2009–2011', [council report], Birmingham: Birmingham City Council, 2011, 16.

33. Housing and Sandwell MBC Budgets

This note illustrates the contention among stakeholder Interviewees that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was subsidising the council's general fund in the early 1990s.²⁵³

This officer-level practice contrasted with the formal political commitment to council housing. As noted in Chapter 4, Members budgeted for rate contributions to the housing revenue account every year between 1977/78 and 1989/90, when the HRA was ringfenced through legislation (Table 39).²⁵⁴ This reverse subsidy was held to operate through excessive professional fees by technical services staff (architects, engineers and planners) and expensive housing office rentals for the newly decentralised housing service. Nevin contended that costs were also displaced to the HRA through the deliberate failure to adopt roads, or recognise empty areas around tower blocks were public open space, and therefore a call on the general fund for maintenance.²⁵⁵

²⁵³ The housing revenue account (HRA) is an account of expenditure and income for housing services that every local housing authority must keep under the terms of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (section 74). The use of this account is thus prescribed by statute and local authorities are not allowed to fund any expenditure for non-housing related services from this account, which is kept separate or ring-fenced from other council activities. The General Fund is the main revenue fund from which the cost of council services is met.

²⁵⁴ A total of £24.3m in contributions from the General Fund was budgeted and the actual expenditure was £29.7m in 1977-90: Sandwell MBC, 'Revenue Budget Books', [council report], West Bromwich and Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, [1975/76 to 2014/15].

²⁵⁵ Brendan Nevin, 'Interviews with Author', 6 August and 24 September 2013, 7 September 2015.

Wilkinson remarked: 'You could spend HRA on anything. This is one of the reasons I suppose why the HRA owns lots of shops—and a lot of public highway . . .'²⁵⁶ It was suggested this was officer-level practice, orchestrated at the corporate centre, to mitigate service cuts, but which reflected the prevailing organisational culture. According to Young:

When I became chair of finance, the borough treasurer was very candid to me about the strategies he employed in order to protect education and social care in the early nineties. There were disproportionate charges into housing at that time, because the HRA could sustain that level of contribution to the wider council because of its protected source of income. It was like we were getting a bunch of money in from our admittedly rotten housing. All that would have been seen as was income into the council coffers.²⁵⁷

Former housing director Lucas thought excessive recharges in Sandwell cost housing roughly £1m a year, while remarking it was commonplace practice in local government:

Housing had this big bag of cash and it was envy from others. But hey, it goes on in every local authority that's had a housing revenue account since Day 1. When I came here and saw the level of recharges I thought—it's what I'd expect.²⁵⁸

Support for this view can be seen in recent criticism of HRA 'raiding' by local authorities to mitigate austerity cuts made in 2014.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁶ Wilkinson, 'Interview'.

²⁵⁷ Richard Young, 'Interviews with Author', 31 May 2012, 25 September 2013 and 23 April 2014.

²⁵⁸ Lucas, 'Interview'.

²⁵⁹ 'Systematic raiding of housing revenue accounts', *Inside Housing*, 20 June 2014.

Table 39: General Fund Contributions to Housing Revenue Account, Sandwell MBC: Budgeted and outturn, 1977–90

Period	Cash terms (£)		Real terms (£, 2012/13 prices)	
	Budget	Revised estimate	Budget	Revised estimate
1977/78	1,737,490	1,177,460	7,722,521	5,233,388
1978/79	1,205,290	1,203,440	4,830,047	4,822,634
1979/80	1,323,160	1,317,150	4,544,755	4,524,112
1980/81	1,505,850	3,011,000	4,373,276	8,744,518
1981/82	3,773,000	3,973,000	10,000,795	10,530,920
1982/83	1,040,000	1,203,000	2,581,350	2,985,927
1983/84	1,389,000	2,218,370	3,302,190	5,273,922
1984/85	1,365,300	1,108,000	3,090,802	2,508,320
1985/86	1,204,000	1,258,000	2,587,856	2,703,923
1986/87	1,315,000	1,199,000	2,746,622	2,504,334
1987/88	1,271,000	3,354,000	2,519,875	6,649,616
1988/89	5,920,000	6,663,800	11,019,284	12,403,767
1989/90	1,251,100	1,583,400	2,181,669	2,761,134
Total 1977–90	24,300,190	29,269,620	61,501,042	71,646,515

Source: Sandwell MBC, 'Revenue Budget Books', [council report], West Bromwich and Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, [1975/76 to 2014/15].

34. Neighbourhood Hierarchy and Stigma in Smethwick

Eling, a Bearwood councillor, located Windmill Lane within a wider historic context of

Smethwick as a town, which had a distinct neighbourhood hierarchy:

There was always somewhere that everyone thought was the rough bit. 'Over the steps'; the 'wrong side of the track' was North Smethwick. Up Brasshouse Lane, Sandwell Place was 'The Barracks'. Mornington Road was rough. For the people who lived up there, apparently, according to my father, the roughest you could get—the place that didn't have anywhere to look down on, was King Street.²⁶⁰

He suggested there were places commonly regarded as 'rough areas', but these were not

'problem areas.' In old Smethwick, Soho ward was reportedly seen as 'rouger' than

Victoria, partly because of the small factory houses in the oldest areas close to Six Ways.²⁶¹

The street of Windmill Lane formed the ward boundary between Soho and Victoria. Only

²⁶⁰ Eling, 'Interviews'.

²⁶¹ Eling, 'Interviews'.

after redevelopment did 'Windmill Lane' became the shorthand for the arc of council across Soho and Victoria. Across inner-urban areas in British cities previously 'rough' areas targeted for slum clearance became in their replacement guise 'difficult-to-let', 'difficult-to-manage', 'problem' and 'sink' estates in a sharpened neighbourhood hierarchy. This raises the issue of how problems are socially constructed, how they appear on the policy agenda and how this changes over time.²⁶²

35. Soho, Victoria, 'Windmill Lane' and 'Black Patch'

This note continues the discussion of place identity in Smethwick. The names and boundaries of the localities in the Windmill Lane and Cape Hill area are not universally understood or accepted. Those mapped in Figure 21 are an interpretation of the author. The Baldwin and Price Street area and the Windmill Lane flats were named the 'All Saints' and 'New Church' estates respectively, but these never caught on.²⁶³ The corporation's 'French Walls' designation did, but it was originally the name of a nearby farm and associated nineteenth-century metal works.²⁶⁴ The Boulton and Murdock Place flats were sometimes described as the 'Corbett Street flats'.²⁶⁵ The townhouses area at the end of Grove Lane was usually described in the local newspaper as 'Wills Way', but following a consultation exercise during the Estate Action programme was renamed 'New Hope Estate'. Just along from there, a former pub at the boundary, 'The Cape of Good Hope', gave the

²⁶² Allan Cochrane, *Understanding Urban Policy: A critical approach* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 3; Rob Atkinson and Graham Moon, *Urban Policy in Britain: The City, the State and the Market* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), 17.

²⁶³ 'Erection of houses', *Smethwick Civic News*, October 1963.

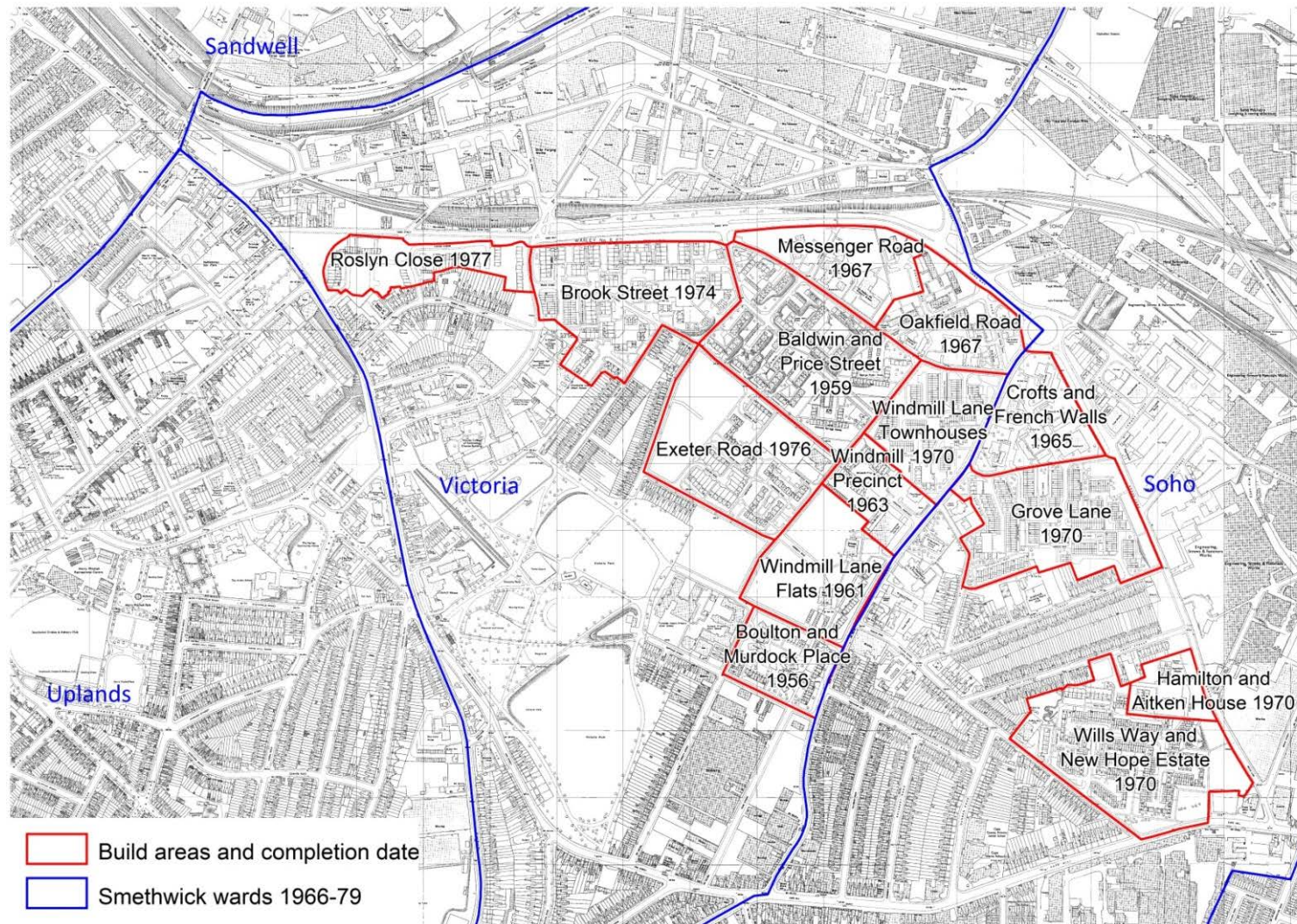
²⁶⁴ Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', 94.

²⁶⁵ 'Corbett Street flats', *Midlands News*, 27 August 1970 [Television news broadcast], MACE: <<http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/atv-today-27081970-corbett-street-flats/MediaEntry/14989.html>> accessed 28 August 2014.

district its name, with 'the Cape' a more common rendition than 'Cape Hill'. Cape was the name of a pre-1966 Smethwick ward. The two areas of townhouses along Grove Lane were also originally together described as the 'Cape Estate' and then 'Cape Hill Estate'. By the late 1980s, all the council housing to the west of Windmill Lane came under the 'Windmill Lane' lettings area; all the housing to the east formed the 'Cape Hill' lettings area. Later they were combined as 'Windmill Lane'. Cape Hill now appears to refer to the private housing adjoining the Cape Hill shopping centre. In the 2000s, Sandwell MBC and its consultant masterplanners opted for 'Windmill Eye' to describe the area bounded by High Street-Cape Hill-Grove Lane-Tollhouse Way. This popularly-unused term was still deployed in council publications.²⁶⁶ Many other location name variations could be cited.

²⁶⁶ Marianne Monro, 'Interview with Author', 21 May 2013. See 'Plans for new homes in the Windmill Eye area of Smethwick get the green light', *Homelife*, Spring 2013.

Figure 21: Identified Localities in Windmill Lane following Redevelopment



Source: See Special Note 4: Defining Smethwick—Changing boundaries and area identity. Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. A Landmark Information Group Ltd/EDINA product. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

36. Conditions at Boulton and Murdock Place, Windmill Lane

The locality trigger for the breakdown of Windmill Lane was Boulton and Murdock Place.²⁶⁷

Despite being heated by open coal fires, Horton recalled: 'in 1956 they were the bee's

knees. They were fantastic places compared to what you'd been used to'.²⁶⁸ By 1963

residents complained of 'constant noise and nuisance' by teenagers.²⁶⁹ In a news film in

1970, the blocks appeared in tumult, due to the disruptive impact of numerous children on

elderly residents.²⁷⁰ In 1978, the site reportedly housed 235 children and the council was

never to resolve this conflict. The conversion of flats at Murdock Place to single-person

accommodation was agreed in 1974, following a deputation of tenants wanting transfer.²⁷¹

The plan was dropped later that year.²⁷² Following a 1976 housing committee visit, it was

agreed that single-person flat conversion at Boulton and Murdock Place would be

examined.²⁷³ In 1978 a plan was postponed to disperse families from Boulton and Murdock

Place.²⁷⁴

²⁶⁷ Hall referred to the way a cycle of decline may be initiated at the level of the individual building, when voids or unsuitable placements lead to the flight of existing tenants and/or micro-level management difficulties: Peter Hall, 'Regeneration Policies for Peripheral Housing Estates: Inward and outward-looking approaches', *Urban Studies*, 34/5–6 (1997), 873–90, 875.

²⁶⁸ Horton, 'Interview'.

²⁶⁹ Petition from residents reported to committee: Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', 'Minute 9037 Land and Property: Redevelopment Site No. 1', meeting held on 2 December 1963.

²⁷⁰ *Short Corbett Street flats*. Also see Monro's recollections in Paul Quigley, 'Living in the Sky: A history of high-rise council flats in the Black Country', [research study], *The Block Capital Project*, Wolverhampton: Wolverhampton Art Gallery, 2015, 17.

²⁷¹ Sandwell MBC, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', [council report], West Bromwich: Sandwell MBC, [1974–90], Minute 27/74; 'Lettings Policy - Transfers', meeting of the Rehousing (Lettings) Sub-Committee held on 3 September 1974.

²⁷² 'Vandal-proofed coin-op phones', *News Telephone*, 5 December 1974.

²⁷³ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 115/76; 'Victoria Ward, Smethwick', meeting of the Housing Management Sub-Committee held on 12 July 1976.

²⁷⁴ 'Mass exodus from flats?', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 16 February 1978; 'No decision on flats', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 16 February 1978.

Vandalism, arson, and rubbish-dumping plagued the blocks in this period. Vandalism forced the replacement of lifts at both blocks in 1974.²⁷⁵ Next year the housing committee rejected a proposal to remove the much-damaged play area at Boulton Place, preferring to install new vandal-resistant equipment.²⁷⁶ In 1976, a fire escape at Murdock Place was found to be blocked by rubbish in a flat fire emergency.²⁷⁷ This was followed by a spate of arson attacks at Boulton and Murdock Place.²⁷⁸ That same year, the controlled-entry system at Murdock Place, subject to constant vandalism since its installation in 1972, was abandoned.²⁷⁹ In 1978, an arson attack at Murdock Place led to tenants forming an action committee.²⁸⁰ Vandalised safety doors and blocked fire escapes at Murdock Place exacerbated a flat fire in 1981.²⁸¹ Frequent arson attacks at the block continued into 1982.²⁸²

Complaints of dampness and water penetration in the defective 'No-Fines' concrete design—first reported to committee in 1960—continued to be rebuffed.²⁸³ Warley East Labour Party 'launched an investigation' into 'terrible conditions' at 'notorious' Boulton and

²⁷⁵ 'Vandalism means a week minus lifts', *News Telephone*, 28 November 1974.

²⁷⁶ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 5/75; 'Boulton Place, Smethwick', meeting of the Housing Management Sub-Committee held on 20 June 1975.

²⁷⁷ "'Death trap' fire escape", *Smethwick News Telephone*, 6 January 1976.

²⁷⁸ 'Terror of mystery flats fire-raiser', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 12 August 1976.

²⁷⁹ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 207/76; 'Murdock Place and Cheshire House, Smethwick', meeting of the Housing Management Sub-Committee held on 16 December 1976.

²⁸⁰ 'Vandal attack triggers off action by infuriated tenants', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 6 April 1978.

²⁸¹ 'Inferno—MP hits at young vandals', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 10 January 1981.

²⁸² 'Flats', Central News, 29 July 1982 [Television news broadcast], MACE: <<http://www.macearchive.org/Archive/Title/central-news-29071982-flats/MediaEntry/39150.html>> accessed 28 August 2014. The MACE entry reports that story concerned a roof top protest at Murdock Place, where families said an arsonist was putting their lives at risk, with 22 fires in the previous month.

²⁸³ The 'No-Fines' concrete design was a mass-production construction method used by Wimpey. No-Fines referred to the type of concrete used: concrete with no fine aggregates. On damp see: Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', Minute 7941: 'Redevelopment Site No. 1', meeting held on 8 February 1960; 'These flats are a shower—close them, demand mums', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 5 May 1977; 'Flat "not fit for a tramp"', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 1 March 1979; 'Flat unfit to live in', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 4 January 1982.

Murdock Place.²⁸⁴ They were described as the 'two worst blocks in Sandwell' in 1978.²⁸⁵ It was claimed 'the council was filling empty flats with problem families' evicted from the rest of Sandwell.²⁸⁶ By then two-thirds of Boulton and Murdock Place tenants were in rent arrears.²⁸⁷

37. Disposal of multi-storey Car Parks, Windmill Lane and Black Patch

This note outlines the curious and contrasting history of two of several 'brutalist' multi-storey car parks included in the postwar redevelopment schemes in Smethwick. Such local car parks proved problematic, including the 'Chinese Playground' in Grove Lane and the car park serving the two tower blocks in the West Smethwick estate.²⁸⁸ The most protracted 'white elephant' history of these, however, was the multi-storey car park in Windmill Lane. It was finally demolished in 1987, following abortive efforts to pass it to housing associations since 1975. The car park, built in 1962 with 212 places for rent, was entirely untenanted and had been for years, due to vandalism and theft.²⁸⁹ At this point the housing committee accepted an approach from Victoria Housing Association to convert the car park to 51 elderly persons' flats.²⁹⁰ Planning permission was given, but the plan fell through when Victoria failed to secure registration with the Housing Corporation.²⁹¹ The council then agreed that Normid Housing Association could acquire the site for redevelopment as

²⁸⁴ 'Shocking flats investigation', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 22 September 1977.

²⁸⁵ 'Mass exodus from flats?', *Smethwick News Telephone*.

²⁸⁶ 'Vandal attack triggers off action by infuriated tenants', *Smethwick News Telephone*.

²⁸⁷ 'Houses scheme for high-rise families', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 19 January 1978.

²⁸⁸ Monro, 'Interview'.

²⁸⁹ David Hallam, 'Interview with Author', 11 June 2013.

²⁹⁰ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 228/75: 'Car Port, Windmill Lane, Smethwick', meeting held on 20 October 1975; 'Multi-storey car park to become flats', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 5 February 1976.

²⁹¹ 'Thumbs down to carport flats', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 11 March 1976.

49 elderly persons' flats.²⁹² Negotiations continued to a point in 1980 where Sandwell was prepared to loan Normid £570,000.²⁹³ The local paper reported that Normid 'pulled out at the last minute' from the scheme in 1981. A ward councillor accordingly pressed for immediate demolition of this 'white elephant'.²⁹⁴ The car park lay empty for another five years while the council sought grant funding from DoE to cover their costs from the abortive Normid sale. Following DoE refusal, committee finally agreed to demolish the car park.²⁹⁵ After a long interval, the site was redeveloped as the CAP Centre after 2005, following the demolition of the adjacent Windmill Precinct (Figure 22). In contrast, a multi-storey car park was readily removed at Black Patch. The council had refused to sell a structurally-sound, unused car park in 1979, but demolished it in 1981, 'in view of the lack of an alternative use for it'.²⁹⁶ The minute refers to landscaping the site, but with no mention of it contributing to the pressing identified need to resupply housing at Black Patch. The contrast here with the laboured history of the Windmill Lane multi-storey car park, where conversion to more flats in a situation of housing surplus was attempted, is striking.

²⁹² Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 202/76: 'Car Port, Windmill Lane, Smethwick', meeting held on 19 July 1976; 'Start on flats', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 28 April 1977.

²⁹³ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 245/80: 'Multi-storey car park, Windmill Lane, Smethwick', meeting held on 22 September 1980.

²⁹⁴ 'A thieves paradise—car park should now be demolished—councillor', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 13 May 1982.

²⁹⁵ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 47/87: 'Windmill Lane Car Park, Smethwick - Normid Housing Association', meeting held on 2 March 1987.

²⁹⁶ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 138/80: 'Multi-storey car port, Merry Hill, Smethwick', meeting held on 19 June 1980; Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 15/81: 'Car Port, Boulton Road, Merry Hill Estate, Smethwick', meeting held on 19 January 1981.

Figure 22: Windmill Lane Car Park and replacement CAP Centre



Source: (left) 'Windmill Precinct and Car Park, 1980s', from <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10201281075655725&set=o.493620380687527&type=1&theater> Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust, *Facebook*, 26 April 2013. © Kevin Byng. Reproduced with permission of SHCT: Kevin Byng, 14 February 2016; (right) Adam Carey, 'CAP Centre and St. Matthew's Church, Windmill Lane', 10 July 2007 © Adam Carey.

38. Play Facilities at Wills Way, Windmill Lane

Play facilities at Wills Way in Windmill Lane is an example of community tensions and council inaction. In 1974, an existing play area in Unett Street was claimed to be inadequate and dangerous due to anti-social behaviour, with a resident move to open a play centre at the Unett Centre Church.²⁹⁷ In February 1978, the council halted its activity after a reported disagreement between petitioners for a play centre and the Cape Hill Residents' Association (CHRA) which objected to the plans.²⁹⁸ In April, it approved a proposal to lease a vandalised Unett Street property to CHRA and move the playground from the back of the OAP

²⁹⁷ 'Mothers protest about poor play facilities', *News Telephone*, 10 October 1974.

²⁹⁸ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 11/78; 'Cape Estate, Smethwick - Provision of Play Area', meeting of the Housing Management Sub-Committee held on 2 February 1978.

bungalows to Unett Street.²⁹⁹ It then met with a backlash from bungalow residents and it appears the play centre did not go ahead.³⁰⁰ Later, in 1991, a proposal to build a play centre and out of school club on a cleared site in Unett Street next to Hamilton House was approved; and then appeared to be dropped.³⁰¹

39. Crime and Social Stress in Windmill Lane

This note discusses a principal backdrop to the history of Windmill Lane. Damage and incivility was reported in Windmill Lane from 1960. A note to tenants of multi-storey flats in the Corporation's *Tenants' Handbook* warned against a range of malpractice, including abuse of janitors, indiscriminate car parking, defacing of walls and staircases, trespass on turfed areas, misuse of bin-hoppers and throwing refuse from windows and balconies.³⁰² Anti-social behaviour took further hold in in the 1970s.³⁰³ Windmill Precinct was a crime target and was looted by a 'mob of 150' during the UK urban disturbances of July 1981.³⁰⁴ The Precinct was also targeted at the time of the 1985 disturbances in Handsworth.³⁰⁵ As noted in Special Note 36, the adjacent multi-storey car park was unused because of damage,

²⁹⁹ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 81/78; 'No. 17 Unett Street and the site of Proposed Play Area', meeting of the Housing Management Sub-Committee held on 20 April 1978.

³⁰⁰ 'Residents slam play area plan', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 11 May 1978.

³⁰¹ Sandwell MBC, 'Minutes of the Housing Strategy Committee', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, [1990–2000], Minute 9/91: 'Cape Hill Play Centre and Out of School Club', meeting held on 8 January 1991; and Minute 78/91: 'Cape Hill Play Centre and Out of School Club', meeting held on 2 July 1991.

³⁰² Smethwick Corporation, 'Smethwick Tenants Handbook', [council report], Gloucester: British Publishing, 1960, 77-80.

³⁰³ 'Windmill Lane stealing spree angers parents', *News Telephone*, 25 July 1974; 'New school wrecked in orgy of destruction', *News Telephone*, 26 March 1975; 'Vandals wreck new houses', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 5 May 1977; 'Life in Wills Way "unbearable"', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 29 December 1977.

³⁰⁴ "'Save Windmill Precinct' bid", *Smethwick News Telephone*, 18 May 1978; 'Rates and raids sicken traders', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 2 February 1981; 'Night of fear: Shops looted as mobs run riot', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 16 July 1981; 'Vandal hit traders call for rate cuts', *News Telephone*, 15 September 1983.

³⁰⁵ 'Council in cash plea to rebuild riot area', *News Telephone*, 19 September 1985.

theft and fear of muggings. Drug misuse was described as a factor in gang-related crime and prostitution.³⁰⁶

Repeat offending by young 'runaways' had a significant impact on burglary rates.³⁰⁷ In 1986, the police reported a case where a spate of burglaries resulted in a raid at a squat on the top floor of a Windmill Lane tower block. Seven absconded 12–17 year-olds under the influence of solvents attempted to flee by jumping from external balcony-to-balcony before their arrest. They were returned by the court to their parental or children's home, but four continued to abscond and offend.³⁰⁸ Such behaviour was also a factor in spates of air-rifle attacks on pedestrians from Aitken House and George Ryder reported in 1977–8.³⁰⁹ Interviewees commented on the loss of control of Hamilton House to squatters and pirate radio.³¹⁰ The pirate radio at Hamilton House was Radio Star (c.1982–5) and the People's Community Radio Link (c.1985 to 2003). It reportedly received 103 studio and transmitter raids by the end of 1987.³¹¹ Wilkinson suggested that housing department evictions and police raids of the block (such as one by armed officers witnessed by the author c.1991) declined due a tacit 'truce'.³¹² Noisy, prolonged parties in high-rise blocks were described as very disruptive. Housing managers interviewed related separate cases in the late 1970s at

³⁰⁶ Steve Lodder, 'Interview with Author', 25 June 2013.

³⁰⁷ West Midlands Police, 'Report of the Chief Constable of West Midlands Police 1986', [corporate document], Birmingham: West Midlands Police, 1986, 50. Squatting and repeated absconding/offending was a feature of the 1978 case.

³⁰⁸ West Midlands Police, 'Report of the Chief Constable of West Midlands Police 1986', 50.

³⁰⁹ 'Air gun terror of high-rise sniper', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 20 October 1977; 'Hunt for sniper', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 1 June 1978.

³¹⁰ Wilkinson, 'Interview'; Lodder, 'Interview'; Taylor, 'Interview'; Reid, 'Interview'. Also see: "'Pirates" back on the air', *Smethwick News Telephone*, 5 June 1982.

³¹¹ The Pirate Archive, 'PCRL – Birmingham', [showcase website], <<http://www.thepiratearchive.net/pcrl/>>, accessed 25 July 2015.

³¹² Wilkinson, 'Interview'.

Charles Spragg and George Ryder House where loudspeakers had been placed outside properties on the deck-access, high-rise balconies.³¹³

Crime and anti-social behaviour appeared to peak in Soho and Victoria around 1994, in some recorded crime categories with the highest rates in Sandwell.³¹⁴ One study found Windmill Lane third worst overall, and with the worst for wounding and assault. Cape Hill ranked twelfth overall, but worst for robbery.³¹⁵ A later study of the three northern Smethwick wards found that crime fell in the two years to 1997/98 by 25 per cent overall, outstripping the wider Borough (–8 per cent). A change to police beat boundaries prevents trend analysis, but the beat then covering Cape Hill still had a crime rate per 1,000 population 43 per cent above the Sandwell average.³¹⁶

Windmill Lane did not feel unsafe to the author, carrying cash as a teenage football pools collector in the 1970s. However, on reflection issues thought nothing of at the time seem more significant. Eling observed: ‘So the fact that the bus stop got smashed up and all the glass was still there on the ground a week later; people just shrugged it off and said, “well that’s here isn’t it?”’³¹⁷ The smashed-up bus shelter was the author’s regular experience in catching the bus back from Windmill Lane to Bearwood. His father personally fitted a steel door to his seventh-floor council flat at Victoria Court, after it was smashed-through by somebody fleeing from an assailant. He would leave his car unlocked to regain

³¹³ Lodder, 'Interview'; Wilkinson, 'Interview'.

³¹⁴ Brendan Nevin, Patrick Loftman *et al.*, 'An Evaluation of the Estate Action Programme at Smethwick', [consultancy report], Birmingham: University of Central England, 1993, 69.

³¹⁵ WMEB Consultants, 'Sandwell Poverty Profile 1996–97', [consultancy report], Birmingham: West Midlands Enterprise Board, 1996, 43.

³¹⁶ CSR Partnership, '"Regenerating Smethwick" Strategic Framework—Final Report', [consultancy report], Birmingham: CSR Partnership, 1999, 23.

³¹⁷ Eling, 'Interviews'.

it, hopefully undamaged, after it was taken by joy-riders—which happened several times. He finally requested a transfer in c.1994 after his car was targeted for repeated vandalism.

40. Windmill Lane HAT—Competing central-local investment perspectives

The announcement by national government of the Housing action trust (HAT) for Windmill Lane in the summer of 1988 appeared sudden, not least to the author. DoE, however, had for several years prodded the local authority to respond to the problems of the estate. But the HAT ushered in sharp conflict and both parties appointed consultants to support their perspectives. The consultants appointed to advise DoE, Price Waterhouse, argued:

By any reasonable test Windmill Lane is a run-down estate which badly needs a fresh start. Without a substantial investment of resources and a coherent development plan we doubt whether the estate will be successfully regenerated. We therefore conclude there is a *prima facie* case for a new instrument of management and change.³¹⁸

In western Windmill Lane, Price Waterhouse proposed to clear 420 units beyond the council's own 410 disposals; build 328 family homes for sale and rent; and retain and upgrade 887 units.³¹⁹ Three tower blocks were to be refurbished for old and young person lettings. The plan also included improved lighting, landscaping and other environmental measures. Clearance was to be confined to the medium-rise blocks at Baldwin and Price Street and the Oakfield estate.³²⁰ Thus Price Waterhouse envisaged no further high-rise demolitions in western Windmill Lane following the clearance of Boulton and Murdock

³¹⁸ Price Waterhouse, 'Main Report: Proposed Sandwell Housing Action Trust: Report of the study by a team led by independent consultants Price Waterhouse', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Department of the Environment, West Midlands Regional Office, 1988, para 39.

³¹⁹ DEGW, 'Appendix VI (ii) Report of Suggested Physical Changes: Proposed Sandwell Housing Action Trust: Report of the study by a team led by independent consultants Price Waterhouse', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Department of the Environment, West Midlands Regional Office, 1988, 34.

³²⁰ DEGW, 'Sandwell HAT—Physical Changes', 46-7.

Place.³²¹ In the Cape Hill side, it anticipated selective demolition of medium and high-rise blocks and new-build at the Crofts and French Walls. Layout remodelling to add private gardens was planned in Wills Way.³²² A total investment cost of £39.3m across the HAT area was identified.³²³

The council's own study by PROBE, which restricted itself to western Windmill Lane, identified that only £8.4m investment was needed, if £2.7m could be found from the council's existing capital programme over six years. This step, together with some capital receipts and capitalised void repairs, implied a need for £4.6m. Another PROBE option was less demolition and the creation of a partnership vehicle to manage land assembly and circumvent restrictions on using capital receipts. This suggested only £1.6m was needed, with no fresh call on the council's housing capital programme, and no need for a HAT.³²⁴ The PROBE study did not detail the clearance or new-build needed, beyond suggesting a further 9 per cent reduction (c.150 units) on top of the 10 per cent identified as already in train from Sandwell's own programme. Yet Sandwell's clearance already amounted to a 24 per cent reduction; this gives an indication of the weakness of the study. However, PROBE did question the retention of two tower blocks in Windmill Lane, Mill and Croxall. The total

³²¹ They commented, approvingly: 'The effect on the housing pattern within the estate is therefore minimal': PROBE, 'Windmill Lane and Lion Farm: Regeneration proposals', [consultancy report], n.p.: PROBE, 1989, 58. : PROBE, 'Windmill Lane and Lion Farm', 52.

³²² Price Waterhouse, 'Proposed Sandwell Housing Action Trust: Report of the supplementary study of the wider Cape Hill area by a team led by independent consultants Price Waterhouse', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Department of the Environment, West Midlands Regional Office, 1989, para 75. The relevant appendix to the supplementary study covering the physical survey and proposed works from DEGW is unobtainable. The main report did not quantify the demolition, new-build and refurbishment identified for Cape Hill.

³²³ This comprised £22.9m at Windmill Lane and £16.4m at Cape Hill on local authority housing: Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Cape Hill Study', para 159.

³²⁴ PROBE, 'Windmill Lane and Lion Farm', 55-7.

housing capital budget for Sandwell in 1988/89 was only £18.8m and the unrealism of the PROBE advice was underlined by the £20.5m actually spent in Windmill Lane in 1986–94.³²⁵

41. Windmill Lane and the HAT—Community perspectives

The HAT period generated significant insights about local conditions and community priorities in Windmill Lane. Not surprisingly, neighbourhood satisfaction was found to be low when the HAT was announced, at 46 per cent in western Windmill Lane and 50 per cent in Cape Hill.³²⁶ This compared to 73 per cent in Lion Farm (the other HAT area) and 82 per cent in Sandwell.³²⁷ Wider evidence suggests that area satisfaction is related to a number of factors, including location and housing market context, physical and social environment, local amenities, housing quality and the reputation and status of an area.³²⁸

Crime and vandalism was the biggest single concern in Windmill Lane, by 26 per cent followed by housing, mentioned by 7 per cent. The main areas of dissatisfaction, for some 35–45 per cent of those surveyed by MORI were: the cleanliness of roads/paths; security to feel safe in home; effectiveness of heating; play areas for children; the lighting on estate; and speed of repairs.³²⁹ DoE surveys found considerable dissatisfaction with homes, particularly heating, insulation and damp.³³⁰ There was significant concern with estate security and cleanliness. Residents most commonly called for extra policing and better

³²⁵ Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Cape Hill Study', para 62.

³²⁶ Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Cape Hill Study', para 25.

³²⁷ Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Cape Hill Study', para 25. Sandwell figure from 1989 MORI poll undertaken by Sandwell MBC: Chris Wright, 'Sandwell property and neighbourhood satisfaction back then', [personal communication to author], 29 July 2015.

³²⁸ Gill Davidson, David McGuinness *et al.*, "'It'll get worse before it gets better"—Local experiences of living in a regeneration area', *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, 7/1 (2013), 55–66, 56.

³²⁹ Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Main Report', para 108–109.

³³⁰ Nevin, Loftman *et al.*, 'Estate Action Evaluation', 34.

security, and the demolition of tower blocks. There was support to build new homes, and modernise council property, especially with better heating.³³¹ Discontent with Sandwell's housing service was greater in Cape Hill than western Windmill Lane (Figure 23).³³²

Nonetheless across the area there was a strong underlying loyalty to the local authority. Residents were on balance, positive about Sandwell's housing service, including rents.³³³ Two-thirds (67 per cent) in Windmill Lane professed themselves happy with Sandwell's repair service.³³⁴ There was little knowledge of alternative forms of housing management, or interest in becoming more involved in estate management.³³⁵

³³¹ Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Main Report', para 112-113.

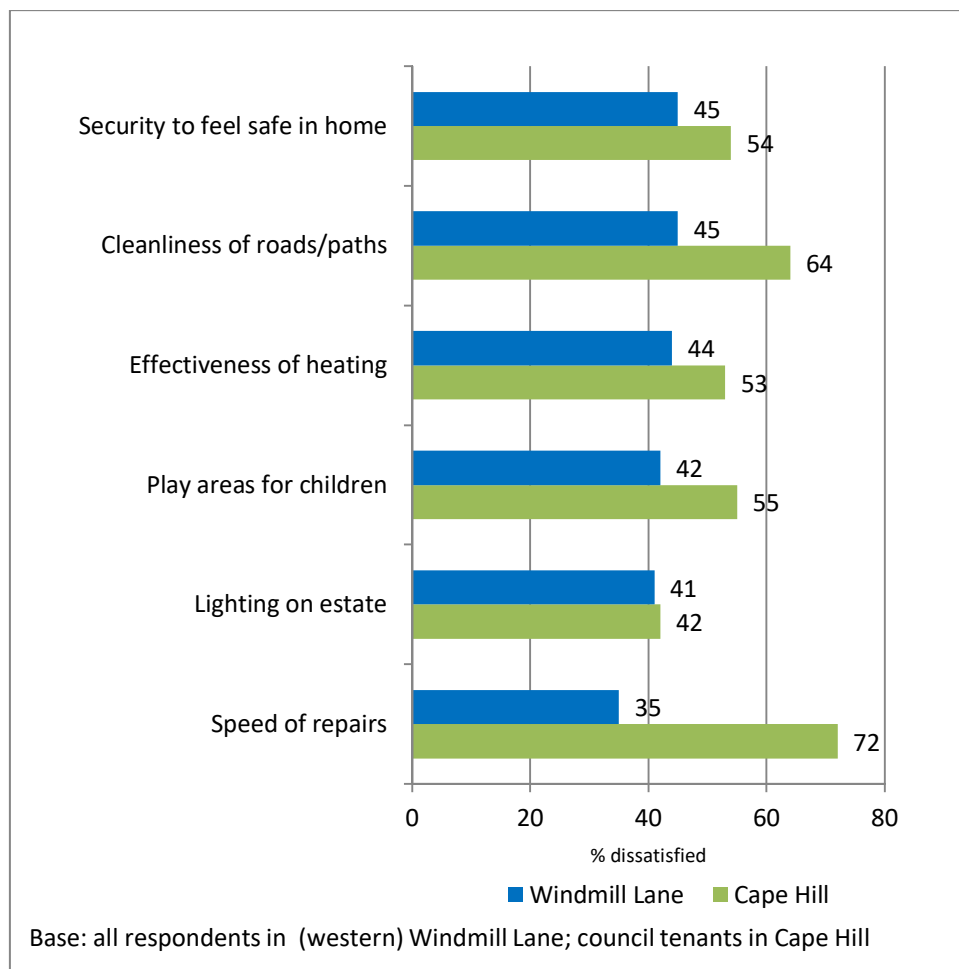
³³² Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Cape Hill Study', para 33, 92.

³³³ Price Waterhouse, 'Sandwell HAT—Main Report', para 108-109.

³³⁴ PROBE, 'Windmill Lane and Lion Farm', 37-38.

³³⁵ MORI, 'Appendix V: A survey of residents from the Whiteheath and Windmill Lane estates in Sandwell: Proposed Sandwell Housing Action Trust: Report of the study by a team led by independent consultants Price Waterhouse', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Department of the Environment, West Midlands Regional Office, 1988, 31-32.

Figure 23: Dissatisfaction with Estate Services in Windmill Lane, 1988–9



Source: MORI Surveys (Windmill Lane 1988 and Cape Hill 1989)—Price Waterhouse, 'Proposed Sandwell Housing Action Trust: Report of the supplementary study of the wider Cape Hill area by a team led by independent consultants Price Waterhouse', [consultancy report], Birmingham: Department of the Environment, West Midlands Regional Office, 1989, *passim*.

42. Public Art in Windmill Precinct, 1964 and 1993

In Chapter 2, it is suggested that the subsequent reputation of the Estate Action scheme's successful community engagement was unfortunately marred by the 'Tuscan' style repainting of Windmill Precinct and its public art centrepiece (Figure 24). In Eling's recollection:

We had all these people who had to arrive and do design and whatever for us because you'd clearly got no idea how to do it. One was the 'Tuscan' theme in the Windmill Precinct which involved painting the upper storeys pink and having damp patches painted on as part of the Tuscan look. You can imagine what people in Windmill Lane living in damp properties thought about actually having what were meant to appear like damp patches painted on the properties they lived in. You couldn't make it up, could you?³³⁶

A scrap metal fountain also proved controversial. This was a dry fountain with spouts made from old springs and metal stampings and a scrap-metal statue of a busker. The sculptures were designed by two local artists to reflect Smethwick's industrial past. Eling was quoted in the *Daily Mail* as saying there were 'better things to spend £14,000 on'.³³⁷ The political reaction recalled the rejection of a water-feature planned in the original precinct construction in 1964, when Smethwick Corporation rejected the £1,990 cost of the proposed water fountain.³³⁸

³³⁶ Eling, 'Interviews'.

³³⁷ 'The happy squanderers of public's hard-earned cash . . . Scrap metal fountain funds down the drain', *Daily Mail*, 26 November 1993.

³³⁸ Smethwick Corporation, 'Minutes of the Housing Committee', Minute 99: 'Price Street Shopping Centre', meeting held on 5 October 1964.

Figure 24: ‘Tuscan-style’ paint scheme, Windmill Precinct, 2002



Source: Adam Carey, 'Windmill Precinct and Cheshire House, Windmill Lane', 4 January 2002. © Adam Carey. The whole Precinct was boarded-up by this point, with the 1993 dry fountain feature long gone.

43. The Windmill Lane ‘mythscape’ —2007 PwC study

The thesis acknowledgements open with the observation: ‘An interest in the long-term stewardship of Smethwick by its local government was crystallised by my adverse reaction to a consultancy report by PwC about the Windmill Lane area of Smethwick, in 2007’. This report is discussed in Chapter 5, with further elaboration here (Figure 25). The particular utility of the PwC report was its (unconscious) capture of the local received wisdom about Windmill Lane. It thus specifically illustrated the ingrained stigma affecting it, despite

progress on the ground. In revisiting the terrain of their 1988–89 reports, PwC sought to summarise local stakeholder perceptions gained through interviews and workshops.³³⁹

Figure 25: 2007 PwC Windmill Lane Study



Source: 'Front Cover, 2007 PwC Windmill Lane Study', from PricewaterhouseCoopers, *Windmill Eye Feasibility Study: Draft Report*, 2007, Front Cover. © Sandwell MBC. Reproduced under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0.

The report made the sweeping claim that the area 'represents everything that needs to change'.³⁴⁰ It continued: 'Agencies report that managing the area is increasingly unsustainable with an underlying culture of benefit dependency, crime and complex needs manifesting itself in anti-social behaviour issues, and organised crime and disorder'.³⁴¹ It

³³⁹ A weakness of the study was that it did not list the range of stakeholders consulted beyond mentioning council officers, Sandwell Homes (the ALMO) and the police: PricewaterhouseCoopers, 'Windmill Eye Feasibility Study: Draft report', [consultancy report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2007, 4.

³⁴⁰ PricewaterhouseCoopers, 'Windmill Eye Study', 5.

³⁴¹ PricewaterhouseCoopers, 'Windmill Eye Study', 5.

appeared to base this statement on the hold of 'small-in-number, but high-in-impact extended families' in part of the area.³⁴² It did not refer to the success of 'neighbourhood tasking': a strong, intelligence-based police presence in conjunction with the former Smethwick Town Team in targeting localised crime problems in the ward.³⁴³ However, in citing a 42 per cent reduction in recorded crime in ten years, Cooper later said: 'breaking that perception of crime has always been a real problem'.³⁴⁴ The author later found that the PwC comments, which he had strongly objected to with the local authority when he read the draft consultancy report, apparently were passed uncritically to Mistry when he started as neighbourhood manager for Soho and Victoria. He commented:

I saw that quote from the PwC report when I first came to work in the neighbourhood. It was the first time in 20 years of working in community development that the remit I had that was about a paragraph and simply said this: people are disengaged and there is no community infrastructure in the area. We very quickly discovered this wasn't the case.³⁴⁵

Also significant was the study's analysis of policy impact, identifying 'successive investments through estate action programmes and regeneration initiatives'.³⁴⁶ It mentioned the 'plethora of initiatives either through NRF, Sure Start and historical programmes such as SRB'.³⁴⁷ It found 'pepper-potted intervention' from a 'multiplicity of agencies and funding focused on the micro-management of the area'; with 'no one agency

³⁴² PricewaterhouseCoopers, 'Windmill Eye Study', 15.

³⁴³ Cooper, 'Interviews'; Horton, 'Interview'; Gary Bowman, 'Interview with Author', 4 February 2014; Diane Wright, 'Interview with Author', 4 February 2014; Reid, 'Interview', Santokh Singh, 'Interview with Author', 21 May 2014. Also see Sandwell MBC, 'Agenda Item No. 7—Smethwick Town Team Update: Smethwick Town Committee, Tuesday 18th March 2008', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2008; Sandwell MBC, 'Agenda Item No. 10—Towns and Neighbourhoods Smethwick Update: Smethwick Town Committee, Tuesday 24 March 2009', [council report], Oldbury: Sandwell MBC, 2009.

³⁴⁴ Cooper, 'Interviews'.

³⁴⁵ Mistry, 'Interview'.

³⁴⁶ PricewaterhouseCoopers, 'Windmill Eye Study', 8.

³⁴⁷ PricewaterhouseCoopers, 'Windmill Eye Study', 9.

or individual accountable for making “it” happen’.³⁴⁸ It contended that a congested ‘institutional footprint’ included third-sector bases and community centres.³⁴⁹ Moreover, these agencies apparently believed ‘current initiatives are merely acting as a holding operation’.³⁵⁰ PwC blamed the ‘dysfunctional nature’ of the original ‘Radburn’ environment and the policy failure to address the area’s ‘reception function’ for those with ‘no choice’.³⁵¹ Thus past intervention had ‘failed to make significant impact because there has not been a combination of investment in the physical and social fabric’.³⁵²

A weakness of the PwC stakeholder analysis was the absence of historical perspective. So the report correctly identified the contemporary absence of an integrated approach to Windmill Lane. It highlighted the extensive third-sector provision and major local authority landholding (Figure 26). But it greatly overstated the extent, influence and specific targeting of various past Smethwick area-based initiatives in relation to Windmill Lane. Apart from brief reference to inadequate street services and housing allocations, it omitted serious discussion of historic local authority management of the area.³⁵³ The difficult ‘Radburn’ stock mentioned was actually ‘de-Radburnised’; but part of Baldwin Street had remained empty since 1998. Importantly, the problematic area of community

³⁴⁸ PricewaterhouseCoopers, ‘Windmill Eye Study’, 5, 9.

³⁴⁹ PricewaterhouseCoopers, ‘Windmill Eye Study’, 9.

³⁵⁰ PricewaterhouseCoopers, ‘Windmill Eye Study’, 8.

³⁵¹ PricewaterhouseCoopers, ‘Windmill Eye Study’, 5, 14.

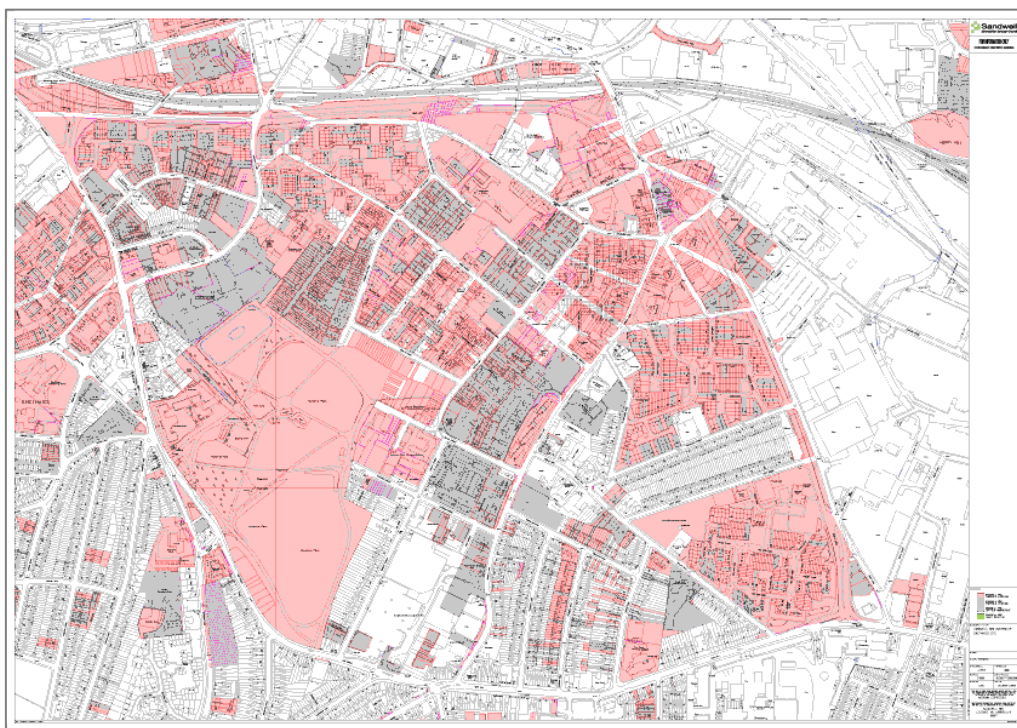
³⁵² PricewaterhouseCoopers, ‘Windmill Eye Study’, 14.

³⁵³ PwC said ‘it was reported’ that the area had the same per capita allocation as a ‘more settled area’ due to a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach by the council: PricewaterhouseCoopers, ‘Windmill Eye Study’, 9. A national study identified low-income households and higher-density housing as risk factors in cleanliness and the importance of effective targeting of resources backed by neighbourhood intelligence: Annette Hastings, Nick Bailey *et al.*, ‘Street Cleanliness in Deprived and Better-off Neighbourhoods: A clean sweep?’, [academic study], York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2009, 7.

engagement and 'regeneration fatigue' was ignored. As noted in Chapter 5, by 2007 parts of Windmill Lane fell in the one per cent most deprived in England.³⁵⁴

This note concludes with the author's own conceptualisation of the history of Windmill Lane. It was developed as a working diagram, or schema, to structure Chapter 5 (Figure 27). For this reason, it may be hard to follow in places. Nevertheless it attempts several tasks, in taking the 'long-view': to encompass the physical environment and 'hard-to-change' characteristics; the visceral dimension of the lived experience and expressed choice; and above all, the stewardship of place by local government and local agencies.

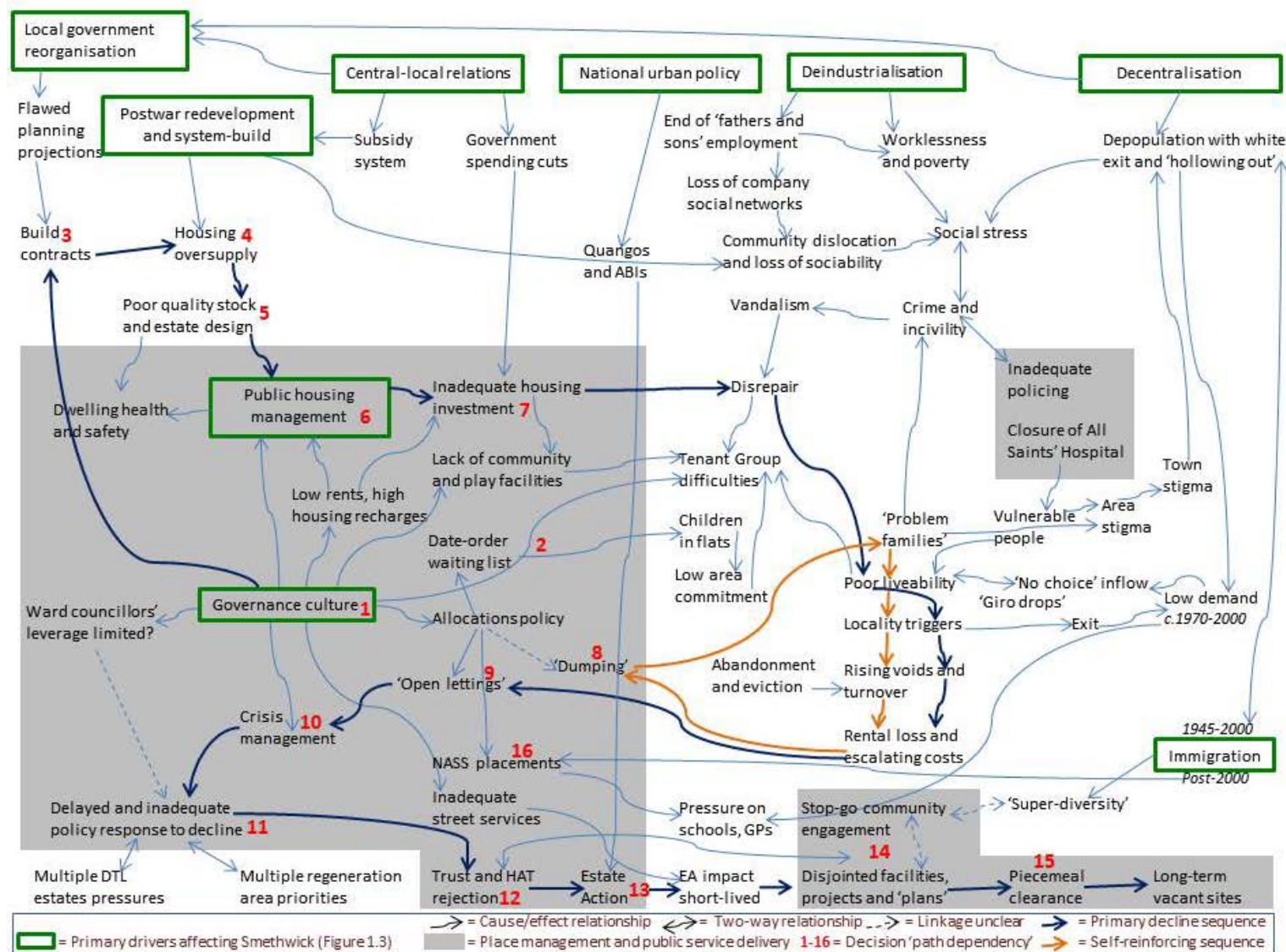
Figure 26: Sandwell MBC Landholding in Windmill Lane, c.2007



Source: 'Local Authority Landholding in Windmill Lane Area', from PricewaterhouseCoopers, Windmill Eye Feasibility Study: Draft Report, 2007, 10. © Sandwell MBC. Reproduced under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0.

³⁵⁴ Department for Communities and Local Government, 'The English Indices of Deprivation 2007', [statistical report], London: CLG, 2007. This was also the case in 2010 but no areas in Windmill Lane were in the most deprived one percent by 2015 Department for Communities and Local Government, 'The English Indices of Deprivation 2010'; Department for Communities and Local Government, 'The English Indices of Deprivation 2015', [statistical report], London: CLG, 2015. Also see map in Chapter 6.

Figure 27: Windmill Lane—An alternative history to the ‘mythscape’



44. Fatalities at Merryhill Court, Black Patch

This final note traces accidents identified at Merryhill Court, Black Patch in its 27-year life.

The last of these was a fatal fire at Merryhill Court in 1990. In February 1990, it was decided to demolish the largely-empty and recently fire-damaged block, but a further fire in July resulted in the death of a remaining elderly tenant.³⁵⁵ The investigation highlighted the absence of firebreaks, deficiencies in escape routes and inadequate smoke dispersal in the block. The minutes also referred to 'strengthening and extending management practices' and more formal communication between council departments.³⁵⁶

A boy also died at the block in 1974. He fell from the fifteenth floor after gaining access to the roof through a glazed, but vandalised door.³⁵⁷ The committee decided to replace the door in all four Smethwick blocks built to this design with a solid flushed door and other roof-top security measures.³⁵⁸ Another boy died in 1964 at the unsecured construction site at Merryhill Court. Smethwick would not have been alone at this time in its practices, but choices were available to it, as a campaign by Soho councillor Vernon showed.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁵ Nevin, 'Interviews'; Wilkinson, 'Interview'.

³⁵⁶ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Strategy Committee Minutes', Minute 102/91: 'Merryhill Court Fire - July 1990', meeting held on 28 August 1991; Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Strategy Committee Minutes', Minute 131/91: 'Fire Prevention in Sandwell', meeting held on 4 November 1991.

³⁵⁷ 'Boy's "unbelievable" climb, then death', *News Telephone*, 30 May 1974; 'Council bid to end death game', *News Telephone*, 11 July 1974.

³⁵⁸ Sandwell MBC, 'Housing Committee Minutes', Minute 66/74: 'Merryhill Court, Smethwick - Child Fatality', meeting held on 2 July 1974.

³⁵⁹ This account is based on contemporary press coverage and was not discussed with Vernon in his oral history: Alan Vernon, 'Interview with Author', 2 July 2013. The press articles were shared with the author by Vernon, but many were undated, hence the use of *circa* in the references.

In June 1964, newly-elected Vernon publicly identified the risks from structurally unsafe properties empty or undergoing demolition in Soho.³⁶⁰ He called for the blocking-up of doors and windows of compulsorily-purchased (CPO) properties and hoardings to be placed around sites.³⁶¹ His campaign mounted, with him publicising the case of a terraced row in Ballot Street empty and exposed for three years, with collapsing internal flooring. He said this constituted a risk to trespassing children exploring the site and argued that moral responsibility for risk lay with the council.³⁶² Shortly afterwards, Peter Baker, a 7 year-old boy, was killed on an unsecured clearance site at Black Patch.³⁶³ Vernon redoubled his safety campaign, while reminding councillors of their continued moral responsibility.³⁶⁴ Residents at Black Patch had presented a petition to the council calling for proper safety measures. Vernon duly pressed the housing committee to brick-up voids and secure sites with close-board fencing (akin to modern hoardings) rather than chestnut fencing (thin wooden stakes) and he rejected cost as a material consideration.³⁶⁵

The initial response of housing committee chair and Smethwick mayor Alderman Williams was that Vernon's proposals would cause the costs of redevelopment activity to 'rocket', due to overtime payments to contractors making sites safe on a daily basis. He argued that boarding-up properties if done everywhere would be subject to vandalism and anyway, it was the parental responsibility to keep children safe.³⁶⁶ He subsequently argued

³⁶⁰ 'Councillor urges safety measures', *Express & Star*, [circa June 1964].

³⁶¹ 'Councillor concerned over derelict houses danger', *Smethwick Telephone*, [circa July 1964].

³⁶² "'Invitation to death' fear at playground", *Express & Star*, 10 September 1964.

³⁶³ 'Bereaved mother gives support', *Smethwick Telephone & Weekly Courier*, [circa January 1965].

³⁶⁴ 'Fence these sites—Saving life more important than saving money', *Smethwick Telephone*, [circa September 1964].

³⁶⁵ 'Children's safety comes before £ s d', *Smethwick Telephone & Weekly Courier*, [circa January 1965].

³⁶⁶ 'Derelict Houses', *Smethwick Telephone*.

that chestnut fencing could be pulled out by children and even steel fences would be tampered with. Then he suggested that bricking-up voids would multiply costs and that demolition contractors were hard to come by and adequately manage.³⁶⁷ He also cautioned against 'sentimental approaches' to this 'thorny question'.³⁶⁸ The committee eventually decided in January 1965 to deploy only chestnut fencing and warning signs. A furious Vernon said the decision was cost-driven and a failure of governance.³⁶⁹ Alderman Williams countered that fencing was not provided by pools in parks, contractors needed site access and that accidents happen in life every day.³⁷⁰ He said it was libellous to suggest it was about costs.³⁷¹ Vernon's comments caused the Conservative whip to be withdrawn and he was replaced as a candidate in Soho for the May 1965 elections.³⁷²

45. 'Suppressed historical alternatives' affecting Smethwick

This note examines possible historical 'what-ifs' flowing from different governance decisions for, or affecting Smethwick. Thus Chapter 6 includes Dutton's remark: 'Hindsight is wonderful'.³⁷³ But to the historian, it can also be a pitfall, because it is necessary to understand the past in its own terms, values and priorities.³⁷⁴ This in turn invites possibly

³⁶⁷ 'Fence these Sites', *Smethwick Telephone*.

³⁶⁸ 'Children's Safety', *Smethwick Telephone & Weekly Courier*.

³⁶⁹ 'Tory attacks Tories on the fence', *Smethwick Telephone & Weekly Courier*, [circa January 1965]

³⁷⁰ 'Tory attacks Tories on the fence', *Smethwick Telephone & Weekly Courier*

³⁷¹ "'No guts" says councillor', *Birmingham Post*, [circa January 1965]

³⁷² 'Outspoken Tory now regarded as "rebel"', *Smethwick Telephone & Weekly Courier*, [circa January 1965]

³⁷³ Dutton, 'Interview'.

³⁷⁴ John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, methods and new directions in the study of modern history* (5th edn.; London: Routledge, 2013), 7.

chimerical consideration of what Malpass called 'suppressed historical alternatives' of counterfactual scenarios.³⁷⁵

The disastrous history of Black Patch is littered with alternatives. Its comprehensive redevelopment for industry by 1966 now appears obvious. Instead the flats built there by 1953 contributed little to meeting housing need, but had pre-empted Smethwick's land-use plan. The allotments used overwhelmingly by Birmingham residents appeared sacrosanct; Warley and Sandwell councils preferring to bypass restrictive covenants to build an infant school and later a community centre in the park itself. While the building the school in 1969 was perhaps understandable, painful prolongation in 1985–95 was clearly mistaken. The author was vice chair of the education committee in 1989–92, when the LEA was preoccupied with a major reorganisation of secondary and post-16 education. Closing a school was not straightforward, requiring consultation and approval of the secretary of state. Merry Hill Infant was not on the policy agenda, but should have been. But once the grossly-neglected Avery Road was cleared, further new-build (as occurred in 1982 and 1990–91) was not required in this environment. Securing the world-significant heritage of the Soho Foundry would have been a more appropriate regeneration outcome.

Lower levels of housing clearance and/or an earlier shift to refurbishment would have reduced the resupply requirement for system-built housing in Smethwick. Changes in national planning policy delayed the production of the Warley structure plan and no local plans were produced. But sufficient demand evidence was available to avoid the

³⁷⁵ Peter Malpass, 'Path Dependence and the Measurement of Change in Housing Policy', *Housing, Theory & Society*, 28/4 (2011), 305–19, 317.

problematic housing designs at West Smethwick (Bison wall-frame), the high-density townhouses in Windmill Lane (Radburn) and the Hamilton and Aitken tower blocks, dogged by faulty lifts. By then they were politically contested too, by the Labour opposition in Warley. Earlier lower-density replacement at Windmill Lane and Galton Village was feasible, with new-build equivalent to the housing in localities like Exeter Road, Brook Street and Roslyn Close in 1974–77, in western Windmill Lane.

The demolition of Boulton and Murdock Place ten years earlier, by 1978, was mentioned in the interviews and proposed at the time.³⁷⁶ However, according to Ravetz, the first credited tower block demolition in England were three 10-storey, deck-access blocks in Birkenhead in 1979.³⁷⁷ Estate management could and should have been introduced in Windmill Lane in 1979–81, in line with national leading practice. Data is unfortunately is limited about the potential for a negotiated housing trust for Windmill Lane in 1984. The subsequent counterfactual of a negotiated Housing action trust (HAT) for Windmill Lane in 1988–90 is considered in Chapter 4, and appeared feasible. The delay until 2013 in redeveloping sites cleared in Windmill Lane from 1998 seemed inexplicable to those interviewed, particularly a ward councillor (and then council leader) and the local MP.³⁷⁸

³⁷⁶ Eling asked: 'Looking back you have to ask the question, why they didn't drop Boulton and Murdock in the late 1970s? They were already a problem'. Eling, 'Interviews'. This was also the reported view of at least one housing committee member in 1978: 'The blocks should be cleared completely. There's no other way around it as far as I am concerned': 'Mass exodus from flats?', *Smethwick News Telephone*.

³⁷⁷ Alison Ravetz, *Council Housing and Culture: The history of a social experiment* (London: Routledge, 2001), 187.

³⁷⁸ Darren Cooper, 'Meeting with Author', 11 February 2008; Spellar, 'Meeting'.

A final counterfactual concerns spatial prioritisation and regeneration effectiveness. Could Sandwell have harnessed its success in winning regeneration funding for area-based initiatives (ABIs) to achieve more in its core area? Certainly, the exigencies of Black Country Development Corporation funding pulled council attention from Smethwick to BCDC's target area of Tipton, also badly affected by deindustrialisation and social stress. By 1994, corporate prioritisation of the Tipton–central West Bromwich–Smethwick corridor was nevertheless logical; into which all major ABIs could have been directed by a single partnership. This approach could have been supported by community area panels built from successful Tipton and Smethwick networks, with a strong community cohesion approach. This overall partnership might have become an urban development company (URC), but either way provided the Sandwell governance counterpart to the cross-border Urban Living scheme with Birmingham and much dysfunctionality avoided. This 'conjoining command' would have restricted masterplanning activity, hastened development in core West Bromwich and strategically determined Smethwick investment. This model would have been limited by inter-local authority tensions in the conurbation and inadequate regeneration resources, leaving parts of Sandwell untouched, but arguably with stronger overall economic benefit.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁹ For example, the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) had few central government conditions attached, but at £66-120 per head it was only equivalent to one per cent of annual spend for major councils. In contrast, central government health spending per head per year in England amounted to £1,631 in 2007/8: Ruth Lupton, Alex Fenton, and Amanda Fitzgerald, 'Labour's Record on Neighbourhood Renewal in England: Policy, spending and outcomes 1997–2010', [academic study], *Social Policy in a Cold Climate: Working Paper 6*, 2013, 15. The value of Urban Living spending in Smethwick (£21m) was less than the cost of the A41 underpass at West Bromwich opened in 2012 (£25m): John Garrett, 'Interview with Author', 24 June 2013. On local authority relations in the conurbation see Henderson, 'From Sub-Regional Networks to Sub-Regional Localism: Experiences of collaboration in England's historical Black Country'.

46. Smethwick as a 'significant and surprising place'

This final note further explores the notion of Smethwick as a significant and surprising place, informed by a map from the concluding chapter of the thesis and reproduced at Figure 28 to serve as an endpiece for the whole endeavour. It can also be read in conjunction with Appendix I, a chronology which also covers pre-1945 events important in the overall shaping of Smethwick. Also relevant are Special Notes 9 and 14. This note is also a concluding personal perspective. For, as indicated in the introductory chapter, the author feels about Smethwick in the same way as Parker and Long did in criticising nostalgic views of Birmingham: 'We belong to a generation that values the city precisely for the conflicts, contradictions and imperfections we had to negotiate while growing up'.³⁸⁰

The transport corridor evident in the map defined Smethwick; its 'locational advantage'. Boulton, Watt and Murdock's Soho Foundry, the successor to the epochal Soho Manufactory in adjacent Handsworth, used sophisticated production processes and management techniques much later associated with Taylorism. The 'Smethwick Engine' now housed at Thinktank, Birmingham Science Museum is described as the oldest working steam engine in the world.³⁸¹ Only three minutes to the west by train, Smethwick ended at Chance's glassworks, a family enterprise which 'illuminated the world'; attracted Smethwick's first international migration; and provided an early school and a nearby public

³⁸⁰ David Parker and Paul Long, 'Reimagining Birmingham: Public history, selective memory and the narration of urban change', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 6/2 (2003), 157–78, 177.

³⁸¹ Wikipedia contributors, 'Smethwick Engine', *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopaedia* [wiki website], <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smethwick_Engine>, accessed 21 June 2014.

park.³⁸² Figure 3.4 in Chapter 3 shows the notable layering of canal, rail and motorway flanking the glassworks, so arresting to the author in discovering them as a teenager. According to its heritage plaque, Telford's 1829 Galton Bridge over his new canal 'was the longest single-span bridge over the largest earthworks in the world'.³⁸³ Further commemorative plaques across Smethwick mostly placed by the Smethwick Local History Society record its distinctive contribution to urban life.³⁸⁴ So does the museum in Victoria Park, entirely run by volunteers from the Smethwick Heritage Centre Trust.

The giant plants of Smethwick's 'great names' are mapped in Figure 3.15 in Chapter 3, but the chapter particularly discusses three also shown in the endpiece. GKN was usually described as one of the world's leading manufacturers of screws and fasteners, its plants straddling the Birmingham boundary, before it disinvested from Smethwick in the 1980s. The Birmid foundries employed 5,800 people, many actively recruited from Indian subcontinent as early as the 1940s. Birmid dominated UK crankshaft production and epitomised the poisonous industrial relations in the motor industry, but fell victim to one of the bitterest takeovers in UK corporate history. Smethwick may have been the 'most

³⁸² Toby Chance and Peter Williams, *Lighthouses: The race to illuminate the world* (London: New Holland, 2008); Baugh, Greenslade *et al.*, 'Smethwick', for migrant workers see 88, 115; for Chance's schools 134; West Smethwick Park see 92.

³⁸³ When it was constructed, its single span of 151 feet (46 metres) may have been the highest in the world, but Telford's 1826 Menai Suspension Bridge was the longest: Wikipedia contributors, 'Galton Bridge', *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopaedia* [wiki website], <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galton_Bridge>, accessed 21 June 2014.

³⁸⁴ SLHS placed ten blue plaques in 2000. These are located at the Old Chapel pub formerly the Hand of Providence, next to Smethwick Old Church; the Tollhouse, High Street; Smethwick Public Building, also High Street; Soho Foundry; Oak Place, site of the Three Shires Oak; Chance House, Spon Lane for Chance Brothers; Bridge Street, the site of James Watt's 'Smethwick Engine'; Abbey Junior School for the parkland of Warley Woods; and Rolfe Street station for the nearby Theatre Royal. Another on the Oldbury Road commemorating Ruskin Pottery was subsequently stolen. They added one to Smethwick Council House for the Golden Jubilee of the Queen in 2002 and one (in green) for John Tradescant in the Shakespeare Garden of Lightwoods Park for the Diamond Jubilee in 2012. A blue plaque was erected in Marshall Street in 2011 by the Nubian Jak Community Trust to commemorate the visit of Malcolm X. The Galton Bridge white plaque was placed by Hadley Group in 2008.

industrialised area in England' but this concentration included the largest companies in the UK such as Scribbans-Kemp, Hope's and Mitchells & Butlers or even the world, in the case of Avery. All were subject to takeover—sometimes promoted by the government.

As Birmid illustrated, Smethwick's postwar industrial swansong facilitated large-scale immigration. One consequence was the early community effort to establish the first Sikh temple to be located outside the Punjab.³⁸⁵ But Smethwick also gained a national infamy for the skilful political exploitation of race relations, enduringly captured in the Marshall Street episode.³⁸⁶ The flipside of multi-ethnic and diverse Smethwick was the decline of Anglican congregations, consolidated into Holy Trinity Church, which includes displays of stained-glass panels from several now-demolished local churches. Holy Trinity, where John Major's parents were married, opened Smethwick's food bank in 2012.³⁸⁷ Smethwick comedic surprises include Dame Julie Walters growing-up in Bearwood and the possibilities that Charlie Chaplin was born in Black Patch and that the fictional Lennie Godber character in *Porridge* was jailed for a burglary in Windmill Lane.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁵ See Chapter 3.

³⁸⁶ Marshall Street is discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

³⁸⁷ 'Research into John Major's Midlands roots', *Birmingham Mail*, 12 October 2012; Trussell Trust, 'Smethwick Foodbank: Helping local people in a crisis', [information website], <<https://smethwick.foodbank.org.uk/about/>>, accessed 12 February 2016.

³⁸⁸ Wikipedia contributors, 'Julie Walters', *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopaedia* [wiki website], <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julie_Walters>, accessed 21 June 2014; Wikipedia contributors, 'Characters of Porridge (TV series)', *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopaedia* [wiki website], <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Characters_of_Porridge_\(TV_series\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Characters_of_Porridge_(TV_series))>, accessed 17 June 2014. Charlie Chaplin and Black Patch are discussed in Chapter 5.

The map continues by charting public sector closures: the former Chance Technical College campus by Sandwell College; and the Midland Centre for Neurosurgery and Neurology, a national centre of excellence.³⁸⁹ It also shows Smethwick's St. Chad's Hospital in Birmingham; nationalised in 1948 and closed in 1982. Also in Smethwick's 'near-abroad' were two short-lived secondary schools, in West Bromwich and Birmingham. Falling rolls particularly affected Smethwick into the 1990s, but an early academy was built at one of the closed sites next to West Bromwich Albion.³⁹⁰ WBA, winners of the FA Cup for the fifth time in 1968, were the only club in football's Premier League from the Birmingham-based conurbation at the end of the 2015/16 season.

Warley Woods, culminating in Smethwick's highest point 753 feet above sea level on the Severn-Trent watershed, was laid-out according to a landscape design by Humphry Repton in 1795.³⁹¹ From 2004 it was run by a community trust, the first such park in the UK and in 2011 was voted England's most popular park.³⁹² Both the woods and Lightwoods Park were owned by Birmingham for historic reasons, dating back to further civic leadership by the Chance family in 1906–11. After park ownership was transferred to Sandwell, £5.2m lottery funding was secured to refurbish the park and the 1791 Lightwoods House.³⁹³

³⁸⁹ Ann Conroy Trust, 'Smethwick Hospital', [information website], <<http://www.annconroytrust.org/about-us/smethwick-hospital/>>, accessed 2 February 2015.

³⁹⁰ Part of the WBA ground is located in historic Smethwick, the rest being divided between pre-1966 West Bromwich and Birmingham—hence its southern stand is called the 'Smethwick End'.

³⁹¹ Andrew Maxam, Alan Reynolds *et al.*, *Warley Woods, Smethwick: Centenary of the People's Park—An illustrated history* (Smethwick: Crown Cards, 2006), 12.

³⁹² Second nationally only to the Old Station Park in Monmouthshire, Wales: Sandwell Abbey Ward Labour councillors, 'Congratulations! Bearwood has got England's No. 1 Park!', *The Bearwood Blog* [political website], <<https://bearwoodblog.com/2011/09/21/congratulations-bearwood-has-got-englands-no-1-park/>>, accessed 22 September 2011.

³⁹³ Sandwell MBC, 'Lightwoods Park and House Restoration Project', [government website], <http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200249/parks_in_sandwell/1697/visiting_lightwoods_park/2>, accessed 13 September 2015.

Nearby, the historic Kings Head Clock was returned from Birmingham in 2015.³⁹⁴ The park, woods and indeed clock transfer so determinedly pursued by the Bearwood councillors exemplify an active stewardship of place approach historically lacking across Smethwick as a whole.³⁹⁵

Alongside this two-way involvement with Birmingham are Smethwick's major 'overspill' housing schemes, first in speculative development in Bearwood and then aggressively pursued by the corporation, culminating in 402 flats at Kingsway in Oldbury. Some thirty per cent of Smethwick's council housing was eventually located outside the historic borough area, in a process causing considerable friction with adjacent local authorities.³⁹⁶ The near-removal of the Kingsway flats by the 2000s signals the critical governance dimension to the map, the overlay of private housing clearance with failed system-build. The 10,600 homes demolished in Smethwick were heavily concentrated in four wards covering barely two square miles. So the consequences were starkly felt in the West Smethwick and Windmill Lane estates, and most fundamentally, in Black Patch: Smethwick's physical low at 421 feet, but its policy low too.

Finally, the map looks ahead to the new Midland Metropolitan Hospital on an old GKN site due to open by 2018; this may prove a more reliable economic driver than proximity to Birmingham city centre, since Smethwick is 'so very close to the heart of the

³⁹⁴ Sandwell Abbey Ward Labour councillors, 'Damp, but not deterred!', *The Bearwood Blog* [political website], <<https://bearwoodblog.com/2015/10/24/damp-but-not-deterred/>>, accessed 24 October 2015. Strictly, it was transferred from Birmingham. Previously located on the Harborne side of the Kings Head junction, the 1905 clock was moved to the city centre following road widening in 1971. Birmingham generously gave the clock to Sandwell for it to be sited on the Bearwood side in 2015.

³⁹⁵ Councillors Steve Eling (council leader since May 2016), Ann Jaron and Bob Piper. See Sandwell Abbey Ward Labour councillors, *The Bearwood Blog* [political website], <<https://bearwoodblog.com/>>.

³⁹⁶ See SN 23: Smethwick Development Plan and 'overspill' housing.

UK's second city, but so far away.'³⁹⁷ It is a reminder of Maddison's fundamental historical explanation of Smethwick as 'an important manufacturing centre wedged strategically between Birmingham and the Black Country having strong links with both, but not truly belonging to either'.³⁹⁸

This final review and, it is hoped, the thesis as a whole, underlines that Smethwick is significant beyond its ascendancy, notably encompassing the chequered role of civic leadership in its breakdown. Awakening from a 'state of quasi-oblivion' into an entity with a reputation 'carried to the ends of the world', it decayed from a freestanding town into a loose township amid a declining conurbation.³⁹⁹ But these very vicissitudes mean it continues to be significant, surprising and instructive. Perhaps it thereby illustrates the so-called 'innovation paradox': the success of failure, the failure of success.⁴⁰⁰

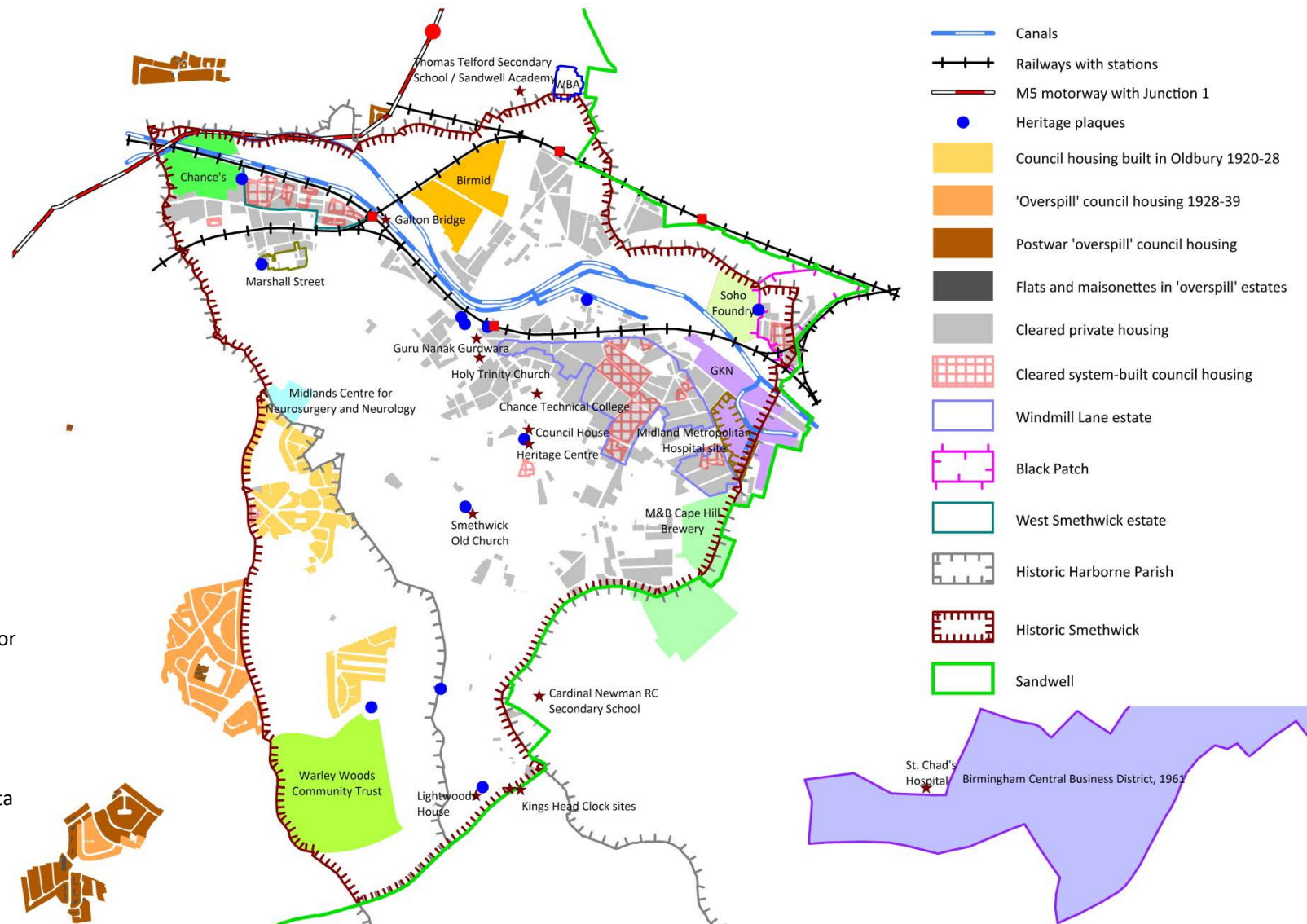
³⁹⁷ Dutton, 'Interview'.

³⁹⁸ John Maddison, *Smethwick in Old Photographs* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1989), back cover.

³⁹⁹ From longer quotations cited in SN 4 and SN 9 respectively.

⁴⁰⁰ Richard Farson and Ralph Keyes, *The Innovation Paradox: The Success of Failure, the Failure of Success* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2002).

Figure 28: Smethwick: 'A Significant and Surprising Place' (as endpiece)



Source: Adapted map data from the Office for National Statistics under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. Landmark Information Group Ltd/EDINA and UK Data Service products. © Crown copyright and database rights 2016 Ordnance Survey 100019153.

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